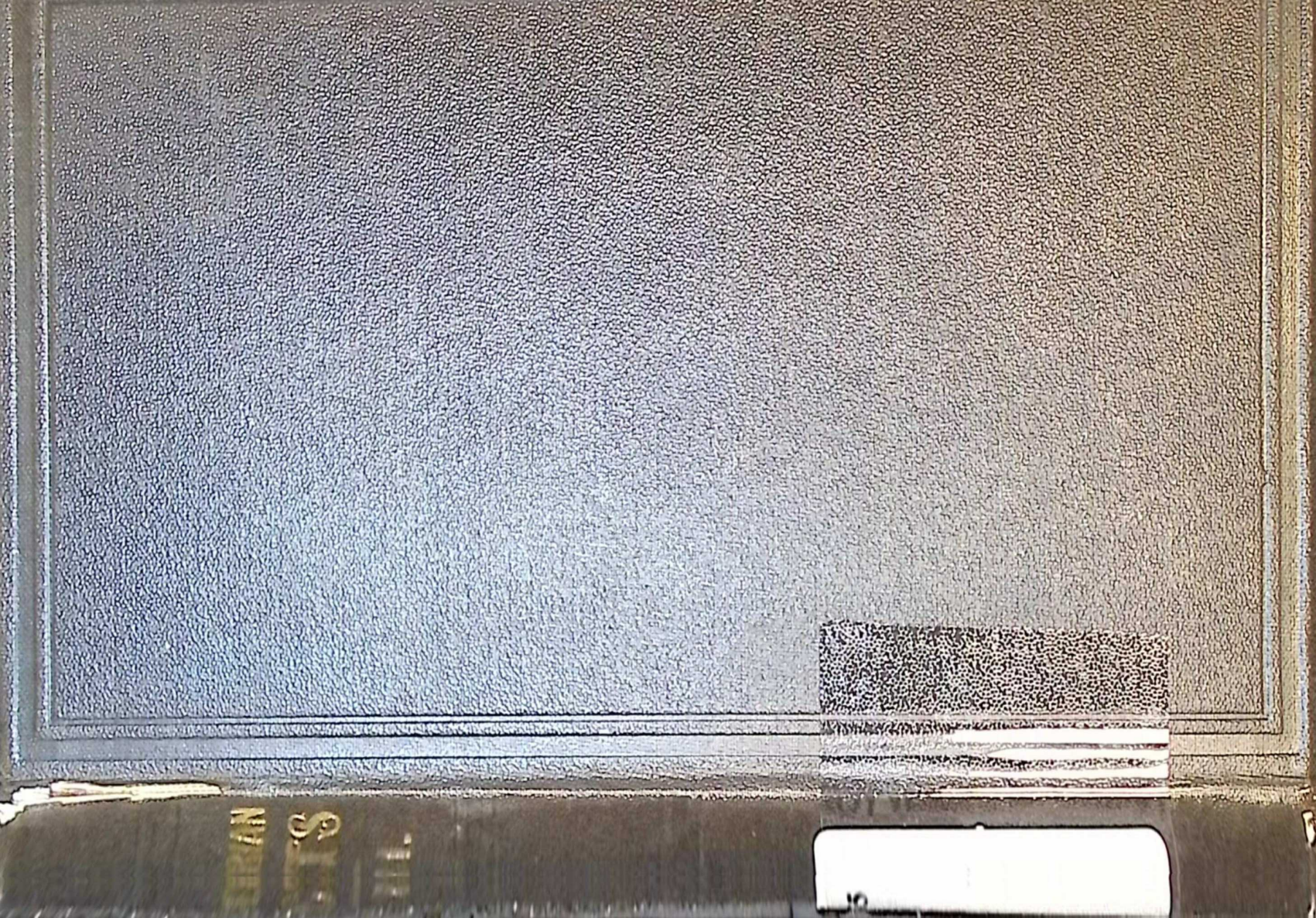

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EMBRACING

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No. 222.

TURN AND LIVE!

By the Rev. W. J. McCord.

Reader,—One word before we part for ever! You must TURN OR DIE! This is the alternative; will you heed it? How often has it, in different forms, been presented to you! The Bible everywhere presents and enforces this alternative. It teaches that the only way to shun eternal death is turning from our evil ways. It places life and death before us, and exhorts us to choose life that we may live, Deut. xxx. 19, 20. It exhorts us to choose between the service of the true God and of idols—between God and the world—repentance and perdition—faith and damnation—heaven and hell. It assures us that they who have the Son of God have life, and they that have not the Son of God have not life. It also declares that they who believe shall have everlasting life, and they that believe not shall be damned; and that they who repent not shall perish. Josh. xxiv. 14, 15; 1 Kings xviii. 21; Matt. vi. 24; Luke xiii. 3; Mark xvi. 16; 1 John v. 12; John iii. 36.

You are familiar with these truths. You have often heard them. You KNOW the alternative is, *turn or die!* And yet you turn not; you flee not from the way of death; you enter not into the path of life. Death is before you, and yet you press on in your chosen way; death is before you, and yet you turn not. Turn or die is written on every thing you see, and yet you turn not! Why this indifference? Are there no inducements to turn to the Lord? Why, the death to which you are exposed should constrain you to turn from your evil ways, and flee for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before you. Heb. vi. 18. There is something terrific in the death that never dies; and the very obscurity which hangs around it, renders it the more fearful; and yet you can sport upon its

brink, and feel no alarm. When urged to flee, you listen not; you stop your ears to the calls of mercy; you regard not when God speaks; and you scarcely pause to think when he points you to the dreadful end of your course, and asks you, Why will you die? Ezek. xviii. 30–32.

The second death has no power to induce you to turn from your evil ways! The love of sin is stronger than the fear of death. Hell does not alarm you! Can any other motive move you? Is there any other which can be brought to bear upon your mind? There is another—it is heaven; it is life! Wherefore, *turn and live!*

The alternative, turn or die, shows what must be suffered if you do not turn; this shows what you shall enjoy if you do turn: you shall LIVE. Then turn and live!

But what is this life? This is not natural life. Repentance and faith in Christ do not insure freedom from death. All must die. The righteous do not live always here on earth. Though piety may have a tendency to lengthen out our days; yet the best men do not always live the longest. The reverse of this is often true. Hence the life promised is not only, nor chiefly, natural or temporal life. It is not the life of the body in this world. It is something far nobler and better than this. Wherefore turn and live!

Nor does it mean the comforts and pleasures, the blessings and enjoyments of life. Religion does not always bring these with it. The righteous are often poor and afflicted, while the wicked live at ease and are blessed with an abundance of the good things of this world. Religion, however, sweetens the comforts and supports under the ills of life; and in this respect, godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. 1 Tim. iv. 8. Still, earthly things are not the life here promised; it looks beyond the enjoyments of this world. It takes hold upon eternity. Heavenly in its origin, it tends to heaven again.

It is spiritual life. When one turns unto God he begins to live. He is quickened, made alive, and he begins a new existence, Eph. ii. 1–3. Dead before, he now *hears* the voice of the Son of God, and *lives*. John v. 25. He is born again; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. He is a new man, a new creature. John iii. 1–8; 2 Cor. v. 17. A principle of new life is implanted in his heart, and he begins to live anew. Hitherto he has been dead, now he is alive—just born into the kingdom—a new man in a new world! He is united to Christ by faith, and he lives by the faith of the Son of God. Gal. ii. 19, 20. Faith is the new principle of the new life; and being justified by faith, he has peace with God. Rom. v. 1. He is reconciled and at peace with his Maker. He has communion and fellowship with him; he enjoys his presence, rejoices in his smiles, and feels that his favour is life. Ps. xxx. 5; 2 Cor. v. 18–21.

Hence this life leads to and ends in eternal life. This is the life chiefly intended, just as eternal death is the death intended in the alternative, turn or die; and when it is asked, Why will ye die? It is eternal life, and eternal life is more than endless existence; it is an endless blessed and happy existence; it is eternal happiness—happiness in the presence of God, pure, perfect, and ever increasing! It is HEAVEN! This one word includes it all—HEAVEN! They who are made spiritually alive here shall have eternal life in heaven. He who gives grace will also give glory. He that believeth hath everlasting life. Wherefore turn and live! Ps. lxxxiv. 11; John iii. 36; Ezek. xviii. 30–32.

And now, reader, will you turn? If the fear of death drive you not from the way of transgressors, shall not the love of life—the desire of eternal happiness, allure you from that way? Above all, shall not the love of God constrain you to seek him? Will you not listen to his voice when he says, TURN AND LIVE? He delights not in your death. He has given his Son to redeem you; he has sent his Spirit to renew and

sanctify you; he has pleaded long with you by his word, his servants, his providence, his Spirit; he has used warnings, threatenings, invitations, expostulations, entreaties; and when every argument fails, and you still seem determined on destruction, he sends you this message and cries after you, Why wilt thou die? TURN AND LIVE!

Come, reader, make Jesus Christ your friend by giving yourself to him. Do this, for you must die; and you should remember your Creator even in the days of your youth. Eccl. xii. 1. Do this now, for you are soon to stand before God in judgment. Jesus is the friend of all who come to him—of all who trust in him. Come to him, and he will be your friend; and he is the best FRIEND of his friends, and he is the most dreadful ENEMY of his enemies! He will say, Come, ye blessed; and he will also say, Depart, ye cursed!! And who can hide from the WRATH OF THE LAMB? Matt. xxv. 31–46; Rev. vi. 15–17.

Reader, why will you die? Turn and live! Secure the favour of Jesus Christ, the sinner's Friend, and be at peace with God. Destroy not yourself. Make one honest effort for the salvation of your soul. Strive to enter in at the strait gate. Luke xiii. 23–29. Listen to the calls of mercy; yield to the strivings of the Spirit; embrace Jesus Christ by faith, and you shall be saved. Acts xvi. 30, 31. As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die? Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye. Ezek. xviii. 30–32; Isa. i. 18; lv. 1–4; John iii. 14–21.

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THE DUNGEON AND THE LADDER.

"I sink in deep mire where there is no standing." *Psalm* lxix. 2.

"Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink." *Psalm* lxix. 14.

"He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." *Psalm* xl. 2.

A POOR man was once shut up in a dark and dreary dungeon, into which the cheerful light of day never entered. The floor was miry and dirty, and the clothes of the unhappy man were spotted and stained all over. He had been a long time in prison, and he was very weary of confinement, and earnestly longed for deliverance, but he knew of no way by which he might escape. The walls of the dungeon were high, and there appeared to him no possibility of climbing up to the one narrow opening by which alone he could get out; indeed, he had often wearied himself with attempting it, but in vain; and in addition to the difficulties, he found that he was as weak as a little child, and utterly unable to help himself. This made him very sad, and he gave himself up for lost. Often did the walls of his prison resound with his groans;—often did the bitter tears run down his pallid cheeks, and sometimes, when his despair and agony were at the greatest, he would utter piercing cries for help. One day, when he had been doing thus, he was surprised to see a faint light at the entrance of the prison; it was like the cheerful light of day, and he heard a kind and gentle voice, whispering to him, and asking him, if he would like to come out of that dungeon. He thought at first, he must be dreaming, but the invitation was again and again repeated, and every time, with more and more earnest persuasion; so

that, at length, he found that it was really true. He sprung joyfully upon his feet, but all at once his countenance became sadder than ever, and he said, "Oh, why did you come to mock me by asking me to come out of such a prison as this, without providing a way by which I might escape?" As he said these words, the light which had gradually become brighter, filled his dungeon, and a bright sunbeam suddenly lighted it up in every direction, and to his unspeakable delight, he saw a ladder lying in one corner, which, owing to the darkness, he had never perceived before. He hastily seized it and placed it against the wall of the dungeon, and then began to ascend. When he reached the top of the ladder, all the efforts he made to get out were vain, for the passage was barely wide enough for his naked body. The voice again addressed him, "Strip off these filthy, tattered garments, and a new suit shall be given you." He was quite unwilling to leave it behind, and tried again and again, but to no purpose; at last, after wearying himself with the efforts he made, he felt that he must either leave them behind him, or remain in the dungeon; so casting them away, he crept through, and found himself at liberty. The clothes which he had worn in the prison were replaced by new ones. He was free, and he went on his way thankful to his Deliverer and rejoicing in his liberty.

And now, dear reader, what do we learn from this man's history? By nature we are all lying in darkness and the shadow of death. We are spotted with sin, we are unclean, unclean! We know not what to do; we cannot help ourselves, and we know of no way of escape. We try to establish a righteousness of our own, but find no true peace. The Saviour sees our sad condition, he sends his Holy Spirit to enlighten us, he sends us his word to invite us to come forth. He shows us the only way by which we can escape. We hear it with joy, but still cling to the filthy rags of our own righteousness, until finding by repeated and bitter

experience, that it is useless, we cast all away, and trusting alone to the all sufficient merits of Jesus, we are set free, and clothed in the robes of his perfect righteousness, and we go on our way rejoicing.

"ENTER IN AT THE STRAIT GATE."

We have a most striking illustration of this passage, in the following account, extracted from the life of Major General Burn, a pious officer in the British Navy.

About a fortnight or more after my brother's death, while I continued in a mournfully disconsolate state of mind, because I could not love Christ, I dreamed a very distinct and remarkable dream, which had such a happy effect upon my heart, that I have ever since looked upon it as the principal means the Almighty was pleased to employ in bringing about my thorough conversion. I thought I was sitting a little before daylight in the morning, with my deceased brother, on the wall of the parish church-yard, where we had lived many years together. We remained silent for some time, and then he asked me if I would not go with him into the church. I readily consented, and immediately rising up walked with him towards the porch, or outer gate, which I thought was very large and spacious; but when we had passed through it, and came to the inner door that led directly into the body of the church, some way or other, but how I could not well conceive, my brother slipped in before me; and when I attempted to follow, which I was all eagerness to do, the door, which slid from the top to the bottom, like those in some fortified towns on the continent, was instantly let down more than half way, so that I now found it requisite to bend myself almost double before I could pos-

sibly enter. But as I stooped to try, the door continued falling lower and lower, and consequently the passage became so narrow that I found it altogether impracticable in that posture. Grieved to be left behind, and determined to get in, if possible, I fell down on my hands, and tried to squeeze my head and shoulders through; but finding myself still too high, I then kneeled down, crept, wrestled, and pushed more eagerly, but all to no purpose. Vexed to the last degree, yet unwilling to be left outside, I came to the resolution of throwing off all my clothes, and crawling like a worm; but being very desirous to preserve a fine silk embroidered waistcoat which I had brought from France, I kept that on in hopes of being able to carry it with me. Then laying myself flat on my face, I toiled, and pushed, and strove, soiled my embroidered waistcoat, but could not get in, after all. At last, driven almost to despair, I stripped myself entirely, and forced my body between the door and the ground, till the rough stones and gravel tore all the skin and flesh upon my breast, and (as I thought) covered me with blood. Indifferent, however, about this, and perceiving I advanced a little, I continued to strive and squeeze with more violence than ever, till at last I got safely through. As soon as I stood upon my feet on the inside, an invisible hand clothed me in a long white robe; and as I turned round to view the place, I saw a goodly company of saints, among whom was my brother, all dressed in the same manner, partaking of the Lord's supper. I sat down in the midst of them, and the bread and wine being administered to me, I felt such seraphic joy, such celestial ecstasy, as no mortal can express. I heard a voice call me three times by name, saying I was wanted at home. My joy was so great and overcoming, that it soon broke asunder the silken bands of sleep, and made me start up in my bed, singing the high praises of God.

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No. 224.

THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE.

BY WM. S. PLUMER, D. D.

THE history of redemption will not be fully written until the last child of God shall be born—born again, sanctified, and glorified. Every year is adding new jewels to the crown of the Redeemer, and new members to the throng of the redeemed. Of these, some are mentioned in the annals of time, but more are not heard of, except in a small circle. God's people are his "hidden ones." Old Dr. Rodgers said, "If I ever reach the kingdom of heaven, three things will greatly surprise me. One will be the fact that some, in whose piety I had much confidence, will not be there. Another will be that some, in whose piety I had little or no confidence, will there appear in glory. But the greatest wonder will be to find myself saved and for ever with the Lord." Every conversion is a wonder of grace and mercy. It is peculiarly so to the soul that experiences the amazing change effected by the Holy Ghost.

These thoughts are suggested by recollections of one whom I long and greatly loved. It is true there is nothing to give a thrilling interest to the brief memoirs of many a retiring child of God. It is so here. The chief events of the life of the dear departed one are soon told. She was born October 11th, 1827; baptized April 22d, 1828; made a public profession of religion in the Presbyterian Church in April, 1847; was married October 15th, 1850; and died December 5th, 1856. She had the best training that could be expected in a family where the influence of pious parents and of a faithful pastor was constantly felt. When she was in her thirteenth year, I well remember a cold day, when she came to converse with a minister of the gospel on the great question of her personal salvation. But her public profession was delayed until she felt a sweet assurance that the step was not chargeable with rashness. Yet she was naturally diffident, and habitually said but little of herself. She never boasted of her experience, yet she was not re

luctant, at proper times, to say to her friends that to her soul the Lord had been gracious indeed.

About the time when she first connected herself with the church, the death of a very lovely younger sister made a deep impression on her mind, greatly strengthened her faith, and gave her a firmness and energy of religious character, which she had not previously evinced. From this time to the close of her life, her way was as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Her first child was one of great promise, but was early taken away. At this trying time she exhibited an amount of Christian character that surprised all her friends. Her soul was borne above those considerations which overwhelm so many in the hour of trial. It may be safely said that in all that sad bereavement she charged not God foolishly.

Early in the summer of 1856, she became satisfied that her last sickness was upon her, and she began to make special preparation for the solemn exchange of worlds. She carefully reviewed her own mental exercises, sought clearer apprehensions of the riches and freeness of divine grace, and by degrees became as tranquil and peaceful in the prospect of death, as if she was merely about to remove from one earthly city to another. This was marvellous; for she was naturally timid to an unusual degree. Then, too, she had all the affluence of worldly possession, which makes this life so attractive to many. Then she had brothers who at any moment would have risked their lives for her; a sister whose heart was bound up in her; parents whose excellence and love had been the charm and the solace of her life. Then, too, the husband of her youth was every way worthy of her, tender, devoted, a friend of God and of all good men. More than all this, she had two little children, a son and a daughter, the eldest just beginning to pronounce sentences of his own composing. Indeed, late in October, 1856, she said to me, "More than anything, children make a mother wish to live." Yet she gave up all quietly, calmly, without a murmur, without a fear.

All her life she had been remarkable for her liberality to objects of Christian benevolence. Yet some months before her death she adopted the proper measures to secure to five institutions five thousand dollars each, in all twenty-five thousand dollars. Some time since, these sums were duly

paid over, and the church where she worshipped, the Bible Society, the Orphan Asylum, the Widow's Home, and the Protestant Infirmary, are thus enabled to prosecute their appropriate work with new zeal and energy.

The conversations had with her the last few months of her life, drew from her the most cheering and edifying remarks. Indeed many things she said were gems of spiritual wisdom and consolation. They were such as these: During one of the attacks of severe pain, one said to her—"You must long to be free from this suffering." She turned her face and said, "Oh, do you think it is on account of bodily pain I want to be away? Oh no; I want to be with Jesus." At another time she said, "Jesus is my only hope." She was to the last thankful for any kindness or attention. To him who had long been her spiritual guide she said—"The Lord reward you, you have been a faithful pastor." She was not without fear that she would at last die of suffocation, but said—"It will all be well; it will all be right." To dear ones around her she said—"I trust we shall all meet in heaven; do not grieve immoderately for me." Hearing the words—"Sweet to lie passive in His hand, and know no will but his"—she said: Oh yes! If I know my heart, I would desire that my will may be perfectly conformed to his." Again: "I would not give up my hope in Christ for worlds; no, not for worlds." Her prayers for her little ones, her remarks to the eldest of them, her charges respecting them, her trust in God for them, were all such as can be expected from none but dying mothers who rest all their hope on the Rock of Ages. She never lost her relish for the word of God, and always was gratified to have it read in her hearing. She found God's word sweet to her taste, yea, sweeter than the honey-comb; often exclaiming, as promises were repeated—"How precious!" She found great joy in those two chapters, so famous in God's church ever since they were written—the 14th of John's Gospel, and the 8th of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Like her Saviour and many of God's people, she showed an aversion to narcotic drugs in her last hours. Like Summerfield, she wished to enter eternity with an unclouded sky. Among her last sayings was—"I am going to my heavenly Father, who can do for me far more than any earthly parent can possibly do."

Many other things, sacred in the memory of her immediate friends, did she say. Indeed no child of God could visit her without feeling that it was a great privilege to behold such triumphs won by divine grace.

About an hour before her death she said, "I am so happy to depart, not merely to be free from pain and suffering, but to be with my Saviour in his glorious home."

THUS LIVED AND DIED

ISABEL,

DAUGHTER OF GEORGE AND ISABELLA BROWN,

AND WIFE OF WILLIAM H. GRAHAM,

ALL OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.

This brief history shows that God keeps covenant for ever; that his dealings with his people are kind and tender in proportion to their youth, timidity, and self-distrust; that there is no substitute for vital, hearty piety; that divine comforts accompany or follow a reliance on divine grace; that the exceeding great and precious promises of God are still faithfully fulfilled; that in the case of believers, death is abolished; and that as our day is, so shall our strength be.

The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.

How blest the righteous when he dies!
When sinks a weary soul to rest,
How mildly beam the closing eyes,
How gently heaves the expiring breast!

So fades a summer cloud away,
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er;
So gently shuts the eye of day,
So dies a wave along the shore.

A holy quiet reigns around,
A calm which life nor death destroys;
Nothing disturbs that peace profound,
Which his unfettered soul enjoys.

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THE NATURE OF CONVERSION.*

THE literal meaning of *conversion* is, simply, *turning;* and in Scripture it is applied—

1st. To the turning of one it may, be already a Christian, from some particular error; as in our Lord's address to Peter—"When thou art *converted*, strengthen thy brethren." Luke xxii. 32.

2nd. To that turning to God which is a consequence of repentance, and therefore, excludes repentance itself; as in Peter's exhortations to the Jews—"Repent ye, therefore, and be *converted*, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts iii. 19. In this sense the term is commonly used in treatises on theology.

3. To the whole of that turning of a sinner "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," by which, to his own apprehension as well as that of others, he becomes a Christian; as in David's words—"Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be *converted* unto thee." Ps. li. 13. As thus understood, the history of a conversion will embrace an account of all the religious exercises of the convert, from the time of his first awakening, to that at which he began to entertain a distinct, scriptural hope that he had become a child of God. In this sense, conversion will include regeneration, all the regenerated soul's earlier exercises of faith and repentance, and the first

* Extracted from Dr. Armstrong's "Theology of Christian Experience;" and altered in some few particulars by the Author, to adapt it to its present use.

fruits which these yield to the glory of God. It is in this last mentioned sense the term *conversion* is ordinarily used in conversation at the present day, and in this sense shall we use it throughout this treatise.

I. NATURE OF THE CHANGE STYLED CONVERSION.

Conversion, though it be ever one and the same, yet will it present an appearance varying according to our powers of observation, and the point from which we view it.

1. Could one place himself beside the eternal throne, and looking down upon earth, see all that God sees, and as God sees it, doubtless, the object which would "fill the eye," in the conversion of a soul to God, would be—the Spirit, working through the instrumentality of the truth, and the carnal heart shutting itself up against that truth. And should he then write out an account of that conversion, it would be in some such terms as the conversion of Lydia is recorded—"And a certain woman named Lydia, which worshipped God, heard us, *whose heart the Lord opened*, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Acts xvi. 14. "God working in man" is *the agent*, and the opening of the heart which sin has closed against the truth is *the work*, in the conversion of a sinner to God.

2. The candid "man of the world," seeing just what man sees, and as man sees it, in witnessing a conversion, has his attention fixed exclusively upon "man working;" "God working in man" being invisible to mortal sense. And should he write out the history of a conversion, it would be in some such terms as those in which Luke has recorded the conversion of the jailer at Philippi—"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God; and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were

shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of sleep, and seeing the prison-doors open, drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Do thyself no harm; for we are all here.' Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas; and brought them out, and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.' And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." Acts xvi. 25—34.

There is nothing here recorded but what is either directly evident to mortal sense, or else so intimately connected with that which is evident, as a cause with its effect, that we feel no hesitation in passing from the one to the other. Faith in the heart is not evident to sense; but having seen the jailer "come trembling" to Paul and Silas with the question—"What must I do to be saved?" and having heard their reply—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved;" and then, seeing him rejoicing, we unhesitatingly infer that he has believed.

3. Should a Christian, after he has attained to something of maturity in grace and knowledge, write out an account of his own conversion, as memory brings it up in the review of the past, he would write an account different from either of these.

At the time of his conversion he was not directly conscious of the operation of the Spirit upon his soul. He felt then, most deeply, that he needed to have a work wrought

in him which none but God could accomplish; and hence, his waiting eyes were turned unto God alone. And since then, as he has grown in the knowledge of his own "desperately wicked heart," he has become more and more thoroughly convinced that *the work* in conversion is God's "opening the heart" of the sinner; and hence, he gives all the glory of his conversion to God alone. But yet, as the Spirit's agency in his conversion was not then a matter of distinct, conscious experience, it does not now enter prominently into the history of his conversion, as memory brings it up in the review of the past; nor was his knowledge confined to that which was evident to mortal sense. He was himself the "man working out his own salvation" He was himself the conscious subject of a spiritual change, and the conscious agent in spiritual exercises.

Such an account of conversion as the Christian would give when writing out his own history, we have in the words of David—"I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he put a new song into my mouth; even praise unto our God." Ps. xl. 1—3.

These three different—but not discordant—views of conversion, the Scriptures present us, not only that thus their account of a sinner's "turning unto God" may be complete, but because each view of conversion conveys its own peculiar instruction and has its own appropriate use.

Would the Christian come to God's throne of grace with the prayer—'Lord, convert sinners unto thyself'—he needs, in faith, to take the view of conversion presented in the words —"the Lord opened the heart of Lydia."

Would the Christian go forth to labour for Christ in the world, he needs to regard conversion as an effect produced through the agency of a preached gospel; and to have ever

upon his lips the message—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

But does an enquiring sinner ask, with reference to his own case, and that he may be guided by the answer—What is conversion?—What is the nature of that change of which I must be the subject, ere I can call myself a child of God? He needs the answer furnished in the above-quoted words of David, that is, *an account of conversion as it exhibits itself in Christian experience*, for it is to Christian experience his question refers.

In this account the reader will notice three several stages of progress, logically distinct and occurring in a certain order, though not always, nor even often so, in the conscious experience of the convert—viz: (1.) His conviction of sin, —described as his finding himself in "a horrible pit, and the miry clay;" (2.) His "striving to enter in at the strait gate,"— described as a "waiting patiently upon the Lord," so that the Lord "hears his cry;" and (3.) His rejoicing in hope, described as his having "a new song put into his mouth, even a song of praise unto God." Let us examine these three stages in the progress of a conversion, in the order in which they have been mentioned.

II. CONVICTION OF SIN.

In his words, a "horrible pit (pit of noise, *marg.*) and the miry clay," David's language is figurative. By the "horrible pit" some expositors understand a lion's den, such as that into which Daniel was cast; others a deep pit into which water is falling, and gradually filling it,—the noise spoken of being that of the falling waters.

Let us adopt the first-mentioned of these expositions—according to either, it is the same truth which is set forth —and the idea presented is that of a man who in some way has gotten into a lions' den; and thoughtless, or ignorant of the nature of the place, has lain down to sleep there.

Partially awakened, more than once, it may be, in the course of the long night, the thought has occurred to him —This may be a lions' den in which I am. But he neither sees nor hears the lions. Because he is quiet, and darkness yet prevails, the lions have not been aroused from their slumbers. At length the night wears away; and the morning light streaming down into the den, thoroughly awakens him. The same light awakens the lions too, and they start into view in every part of the den. He must escape, and that quickly, or be torn in pieces.

When partially awakened, and whilst the night as yet continued, he thought with himself of many ways of escape of which he could avail himself, should the place in which he was slumbering turn out to be a lions' den. He turns to one and another of these now; but which ever way he turns, "there is a lion in the path."—To advance seems certain death. Directly over head, there is an opening which the entering light of morning has disclosed to him. But, alas! it is so high above his head, that unaided he can never reach it. If some friendly hand were stretched down to him, he might be lifted out of the "horrible pit." And the thought occurs—It may be that some one will pass this way; and the possibility of this leads him to "cry" for help. And now that every other way of escape is closed against him, and this has become his only hope, he can do nothing but "cry." And his cry becomes the more earnest as his danger becomes more evident and more threatening.

Turn we now from this figurative representation to the reality. Even the most thoughtless sinner, living in a Christian community, has occasional periods of serious reflection. At such times he learns enough of his case to perceive that all is not right betweeen God and himself, and he purposes at some future time, before death shall overtake him, to become a Christian. He thinks that it

will be an easy matter for him to become a Christian whenever he pleases. He has seen and heard of ungodly men turning from their evil courses, feeling contrition for sin and sorrowing even unto tears, becoming diligent in the worship and service of God, and so being converted. And he thinks with himself: At some convenient season, I will do all this, and be converted too.

This man is awakened, and attempts to put in practice the scheme of conversion he has formed. He attempts to pray—and prayer, as a means of grace, stands so prominently forth upon the sacred page, and in the life of God's people, that it is generally to prayer the awakened sinner first turns—but in the light from heaven which has awakened him, prayer appears so different a thing from what it once did, that it no longer offers an open way of escape from his difficulties. Coming to ask for the pardon of sins so numerous and so aggravated as his now appear, he feels that he ought to come with a heart filled with the desire of that for which he prays. Coming to plead for grace with a God who hath sealed the testimony of his love with blood, he feels that he ought to come with an unwavering faith in all that the Lord hath spoken. Coming into the presence of a holy God, the very God against whom all his sins have been committed, he feels that he ought to come with tears filling his eyes, with "a broken heart and a contrite spirit." But, alas for him! he has no such spirit, and no such feelings as these:—And the more he labours to produce them, the more hardened does his heart seem to become. His feeling is—I cannot pray.

He turns from prayer to some other means of conversion on which he has hoped—to attendance in the sanctuary—to converse with God's people—to reading the Scriptures, and meditation on the truths therein disclosed. But, to his dismay, all these means fail him. Even the touching

"story of the cross" moves not his stupid heart. He is ready to say—

> "To hear the sorrows thou hast felt,
> Dear Lord, an adamant would melt;
> But I can read each moving line,
> And nothing moves this heart of mine."

This man is in the "horrible pit" of which David speaks. The evils of his own heart, like so many lions, now made evident and aroused into activity by light from heaven, cut off every hope of escape in the ways to which he had trusted. His feet are in the "miry clay;" and every effort which he makes to extricate himself seems but to sink him the deeper.

Such was the "conviction of sin" which led David to "wait patiently for the Lord," so that "he heard his cry." And such essentially is "conviction of sin" in every case of genuine conversion to God.

Yet "conviction of sin," as it presents itself in the experience of different persons, varies greatly in particulars non-essential; and to some of the more common and important of these let us now turn our attention.

1. "Conviction of sin," if it covers the whole ground of a sinner's sinfulness, must embrace a conviction—(1.) of sins actually committed, and—(2.) of the desperate wickedness of the heart. A conviction such as enters into a genuine conversion, must embrace both of these particulars.

(1.) In some cases, the conviction of sins actually committed predominates,—And such a conviction, especially if it be a clear and distinct one, will naturally be accompanied with much emotion; with terror in view of the consequences of sin, and remorse and painful self-reproach in view of the grace and long suffering of God against whom that sin has been committed. In such cases there will be

"trembling and astonishment," the earnest "cry," and many a tear on the part of the awakened sinner.

(2.) In other cases, conviction of the desperate wickedness of the heart predominates; and if this conviction be of wickedness in the form of what the Scriptures call "the heart of stone," his case will present itself to the sinner in a very different light from that described above. Instead of trembling and tears, his great trouble will be—to use his own language—that he cannot feel. Mistaking the true nature of conviction, and supposing that it is essentially a matter of feeling—whereas, conviction is but being convinced, and is only indirectly a matter of feeling in the popular sense of that term—he thinks he has no conviction of sin at all.

Such a case is well described and treated by Dr. A. Alexander, in his tract "Sinners welcome to come to Jesus." "Some one," writes he, "may be ready to say, All admit that none ever come to Christ until they experience conviction of sin; but I have no conviction, or none worth mentioning. My mind is so blind that I can perceive nothing clearly, and my heart is so hard, that what I do see to be true I cannot feel. Oh! if I could experience some tender relenting—if I could get this adamant heart broken into contrition—if I could even feel pungent pain or alarm on account of my sins, my case would not appear so hopeless. But how can I come to Christ with this blind and stupid heart?"

Now, my friend, I beg you to consider, that this blindness, and unyielding hardness, is the very core of your iniquity; and to be convinced that you are thus blind and stupid is true conviction of sin. If you had those feelings which you so much covet, they would not answer the end of conviction, which is to show you how sinful and helpless your condition is. But if you felt as you wish to feel, you would not think your heart so wicked as you now see it to

be. And the truth is, that you are now in a better situation to come to Christ than you would be if you had less conviction of the stubbornness of your heart. The use of conviction is to show you your need of a Saviour, and set clearly before your mind your utterly helpless condition in yourself; and that a holy God would be perfectly just in leaving you to your own fruitless efforts, and punishing you for ever for your sins.

"Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requireth
Is to feel your need of him."

2. Another variation in "conviction of sin," as the matter presents itself to the convicted sinner, arises from the way in which Christ as a Saviour is revealed to the convicted soul.

(1.) In some cases, almost as soon as conviction of sin commences, Christ as a Saviour begins to be revealed to the soul; and as the conviction increase in power, so does the believing view of Christ increase in distinctness also. In such cases, there is little or no violent emotion awakened at any time; and the sinner passes from a "state of nature" to a "state of grace" so quietly, that there is nothing to witness to the world to his conversion but his subsequent holy life, the consequence of that conversion.

(2.) In other cases, the soul is overwhelmed with conviction, before even a glimpse of Christ as a Saviour is obtained; and hence, from the very nature of man, deep emotion must be awakened. Such conviction as this is often greatly desired, and even prayed for, by those with whom the Spirit is dealing more gently—not for its own sake, but because they think that such conviction alone is genuine conviction of sin.

"I once called upon Dr. J. M. Mason," writes Dr. McCartee, "in much distress of mind produced by the fear

that I had not experienced in a sufficient degree what the old divines were wont to call 'the law work.' He listened to me patiently, while I described my mental difficulties and desires, and then said, 'Dear M., take care that you do not become rash in your prayers. While I was in Scotland, as a student in divinity, I was myself tempted just as you now are. I called upon a venerable clergyman with whom I was on terms of intimacy, and told him my troubles, He replied to me, 'My son, take heed what you ask of the Lord. I was once thus tried, and I prayed the Lord earnestly that he would enable me to realize deeply the terrors of the law. He answered my prayer, and cured me of my folly. His Spirit, as I may say, took me up, and for a time shook me over hell. It was enough. I have since asked the Lord to lead me by his love, and to save me from the terrors of the law.' And such, added Dr. M., is my advice to you." *Annals of the Am. Pulpit.* Vol. iv. p. 14.

"The Law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ," (Gal. iii. 24,) writes Paul. The end of "conviction of sin," the purpose which it subserves in the conversion of the sinner unto God is—not in anywise to make atonement for sin; the work of atonement was completed when Jesus said, "It is finished, and bowed his head, and gave up the ghost;" (John xix. 30)—not in anywise to break the stubborn heart into genuine contrition. It is God's prerogative to "take away the stony heart out of man's flesh, and to give him a heart of flesh;" (Ezek. xxxvi. 26)—not in anywise to commend us to God's favour; for there is nothing gracious in an unbelieving conviction—but to show us our need of Christ as a Saviour; "a Saviour exalted to give *repentance* to Israel, and forgiveness of sin." Acts v. 31. And any conviction of sin which answers this purpose, answers the purpose for which conviction is intended as a part of conversion to God.

No more unreliable criterion by which to judge of "con-

viction of sin" could be selected, than that to which the awakened sinner is most apt to turn, viz., the amount of painful emotion with which conviction is accompanied. The Scriptures furnish us with no case of more agonizing conviction than that of Judas, and this conviction drove him to "go out and hang himself," instead of driving him to Christ. Nathaniel, on the other hand, seems to have acknowledged Jesus, as "the Son of God and King of Israel," with little or no painful emotion accompanying his conviction. Any "conviction of sin" which brings the sinner as guilty and lost to Jesus's feet, is such a conviction as enters into a genuine conversion.

III. STRIVING.

"I waited patiently" (in waiting I waited, *marg.*) "for the Lord; and he inclined unto me and heard my cry." The emphatic repetition of the word *waited* here—for the marginal is the literal rendering of the text—implies, (1.) Perseverance in waiting, and (2.) Waiting to the exclusion of every other means. I waited perseveringly—I simply waited, I did nothing but wait for the Lord.

I. David's waiting, evidently, was not idly sitting down, doing nothing, until in some favoured moment, and in some unaccountable manner, he should find himself converted. As in the "Arabian Nights," men sometimes go to sleep in a hovel, in utter poverty, and, through the enchantment of a good genius, awaken to find themselves upon a throne surrounded with all the pomp and luxury of an Oriental court. It is true, ungodly men, when hard pressed for an excuse for not "seeking the Lord" as their present duty, will sometimes profess to believe that such is God's plan of conversion, and even attempt "to wrest the Scriptures" in support of such an idea. Yet this is all mere profession on the part of these very persons,—and they

can learn how settled is their conviction that the Lord is to be found, and salvation secured in no such way, by asking themselves the question—How would I receive the tale of one who should tell me that he was converted by accident, or in his sleep, or when there was no thought of God in his mind?

David's "*waiting*" was an active "waiting for the Lord," such as that with which Cornelius "*waited* for Peter," when, having by God's direction sent messengers after him, he "called together his kinsmen and near friends," and stood ready to salute Peter with the words, "Now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God;" (Acts x. 24;)—such a waiting as that with which "Joseph of Arimathea *waited* for the kingdom of God," when, at the peril of his life, he "came and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus." Mark xv. 43.

Thus only can we understand what he adds immediately, "and he heard my cry." Thus only will there be no discrepancy between these words of David and his declarations in other of the Psalms—"When thou saidst, *Seek* ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." Ps. xxvii. 8. "O God, thou art my God; early will I *seek* thee." Ps. lxiii. 1. And the emphatic declaration of the prophet, "And ye shall *seek* me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart," (Jer. xxix. 13,)—and the yet more emphatic words of our Lord when "one said unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, "*Strive*" (be in an agony) "to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke xiii. 23, 24.

With the truth taught in these words of David, thus interpreted, Christian experience everywhere, and in all time, agrees. No man ever yet was converted without being deeply in earnest about it—without giving up all

for Christ's sake. No man ever yet was converted without "waiting upon the Lord," for those gracious influences of his Spirit by which alone the sinner can be "turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

II. The emphatic repetition of the word "waited," is employed by David to express the fact, that he simply waited —he did nothing but wait upon the Lord.

His "cry," the cry which God heard, was in substance that of the publican, who "stood afar off, and would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." Luke xviii. 13. His cry was for *mercy*, that is, favour to the undeserving. And the mercy for which he cried had regard, not alone to an escape from the condemnation due to his sins, but to a present deliverance from sin itself; as is evident from the fact that the cry was uttered while he was in the "horrible pit," and it must have been a cry for a present deliverance from the wild beasts which threatened to devour him, while his feet were in the "miry clay;" and it must have been a cry for deliverance from the mire, in which every effort to extricate himself but sunk him the deeper.

III. The emphatic repetition of the word "waited" is intended also to express the idea of perseverance in waiting.

When, on a certain occasion, during our Lord's sojourn upon earth, "a woman of Canaan came, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David, he answered her not a word." When she continued to cry, even his disciples "besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us." And when the woman, pressing up to his feet "worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me,"—He answered her—"It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs." And she, instead of

being repulsed by such an answer, "said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the master's table. Then"—and not till then—"Jesus said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Matt. xv. 22–28.

Doubtless, Jesus heard the first cry which this woman uttered; and the purpose was then fully formed to grant her request. But for wise and gracious reasons, this answer was withholden for a season. Thus was the woman thoroughly humbled; thus was her faith strengthened; and when the answer did come, it came as a greater blessing in fact, as well as in her own estimation, than had it come immediately upon her utterance of her first cry. In the conduct of this woman we have a scriptural example of perseverance in waiting—of "waiting patiently for the Lord."

To the apprehension of the waiting soul, as well as in fact, there is no shadow of injustice in God's withholding an answer for a season. 'Tis for mercy to him, a sinner, he cries. The criminal, seeking his sovereign's pardon, a pardon which, if granted, must be granted through grace, will not quarrel with that sovereign because the pardon is not forthcoming at his first cry. And, if at any time a disposition "to charge God foolishly" on this account, should arise, the remembrance of how long and how patiently God has waited with him, how often God has called upon him, and his call been unheeded, will cause him to place "his hand upon his mouth" before God.

IV. When the awakened sinner first asks the question, "What must I do to be saved?" it is often done in very much the same spirit in which the young ruler asked our Lord, "Good Master, what *good thing* shall I do that I may have eternal life?" (Matt. xix. 16.)—that is, Many a *good thing* "have I done from my youth up; what lack I yet?" And hence it is, that when a reply is made in the

very words of scripture, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," (Acts xvi. 34,) he is offended. Had he been told to clothe himself in sackcloth—to subject himself to a long course of fasting—to go on pilgrimage to some distant shrine, he would have closed in with the offer at once. But when a course so humbling to the self-sufficiency and pride of the carnal heart, as simply believing in Christ, simply "crying" unto him as David did, or trusting him "at a venture" as the woman of Canaan did, or parting with all that he hath that he may follow Jesus as was required of the young ruler, is pointed out to him, he is offended; and he either turns back to the world again, or he begins to cavil, because, as he says, he cannot understand what is meant by such an answer as this.

To such an one, we say—In the sense in which you use the word "*do*," that is, in the sense of deeds which can commend you to God's favour, or deeds which can so affect your heart as to make you worthy of God's grace, there is nothing for you to "*do*,"—And we add, on your knees thank God that there is nothing for you to "*do*." God has done, and will do all. And what is required of you is, that as a guilty, ruined sinner, you "come unto Christ," just as you are; that he may save you, not alone from the condemnation due to sin, but also from sin itself,—and first among your sins, from your unreasonable, your guilty unbelief.

In this spirit "wait patiently for the Lord," and "cry" unto him for the pardon of sin and renewing grace, for thus "waiting" and "crying" David was heard and "a new song was put into his mouth."

IV. REJOICING IN HOPE.

"HE set my feet upon a rock, and established my "goings. And HE hath put a new song into my mouth, "even praise unto our God."

In the faith of the Old Testament saints, there was a less explicit recognition of Jesus, the Saviour, as the Son of God, in his personal distinction from the Father and the Spirit; and of God the Spirit, as the efficient agent in the new birth of the soul, than there is in that of God's people under this our clearer gospel dispensation. And yet the substantial identity of their faith and ours, even as to the proper divinity of the Saviour and Sanctifier in whom they trusted, is evident from such language as—"There is no God else besides me; a just God and a Saviour: Look unto *me*, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Isa. xiv. 21, 22. "Wash me"—that is, Do thou, God, wash me—"thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden parts *thou*"—that is thou, God—"shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Ps. li. 2, 6, 7.

It was in a clear perception and a hearty reception of the truth expressed in the words—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on thee; trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength (a rock of ages. *Marg.*") (Isa. xxvi. 3, 4,)—that David began to feel that "his feet were set upon a rock, and his goings established."

Under this our better dispensation, it is when the sinner, taught of the Spirit, understands and believes the gospel—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save SINNERS," (1 Tim. i. 15,) that he begins to feel that his feet are upon a rock. It is when, effectually humbled, he has become willing to be saved by Christ, in his own way and on his own terms; and looking to God for grace to serve him, he goes forward resting upon the promise—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the

rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour," (Isa. xliii. 2, 3,)—that he begins to feel his "goings established."

Does any one inquire, more particularly, how it is that the despairing sinner comes to understand and believe these things;—the convert, from his own experience, can give no other account of the matter than that which David gives—"I waited patiently for the Lord, and HE set my feet upon a rock; he established my goings."

Does the inquirer object—This is a very incomplete account of the matter—We reply—(1.) If the beginnings of our natural life are mysterious, it should not surprise us that the beginnings of our spiritual life are so likewise. (2.) This answer embraces all that is necessary we should know for the practical direction of our conduct. Is the question asked—What shall I do to be delivered from the "horrible pit?" it furnishes the answer—"Wait thou patiently for the Lord that he may hear thy cry." Is the further question asked—How can I be delivered?—it furnishes the answer—"He shall set thy feet upon a rock, he shall establish thy goings." And these two answers cover the whole ground of what it is of practical importance for us to know respecting the method, and efficient agency, in the sinner's conversion to God.

"He put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God." Delivered from his sore trouble, how could David do otherwise than sing? As the "cry" is the natural language of man in trouble, so the "song" is his natural language when deliverance has come.

Israel, when hemmed in between the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army, naturally "cried unto the Lord," and just as naturally they sang God's praises when "the sea was passed, and they saw the Egyptians dead upon the shore."

It is true that Israel's deliverance was but a deliverance from present danger, and that a long desert journey yet intervened between them and the promised land; a journey full of difficulties and trials. Yet this interfered but little with their joy, both because the thoughts of their deliverance were, for the time, the thoughts which filled the soul, and because faith discerned in this deliverance an earnest of what God would yet do on their behalf. So with the song of David. It is a song of praise to God for what he has done; and the joy of that song is but little marred by thoughts of future trials. For the time, his soul is filled with the sense of his great deliverance; and his faith is strong in his newly found Saviour, that he who had begun a good work in him, would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. i. 6.

This, however, is not the only source of the convert's joy. The exercises of the renewed soul are joyous, irrespective of all relation which they sustain either to the past or to the future.

The sight of God's creation, cursed though the ground be for man's sake, will awaken joyous emotion in the breast of one who, having been born blind, has, in some way, had his eyes opened to see. So is it with the sight which the soul gets of God, especially of God in Christ, when its spiritual blindness is removed. In some instances, the emotion hence arising is as much as the soul can well bear. The reconciliation of the returned prodigal to his father's heart and home is a source of joy to him, not simply because he is no longer in danger of starving, nor because his rags have been replaced by "the best robe," but from the very nature of the emotion of love to that father which now fills his heart. In the case of the young convert, this joy is all the greater, from the contrast in which his present trust in God and love to him stand to the doubt, and

distrust, and hard thoughts of God, and positive enmity to him of which it has taken the place.

"DIVERSITIES OF OPERATIONS."

As in the kingdom of nature an almost endless diversity prevails in the midst of essential uniformity, so, also, is it in the kingdom of grace. The history of a sinner's conversion to God, though it be ever essentially the same, yet in the case of different persons, presents an almost endless variety in its details. "There are diversities of operations, though it be the same God which worketh all in all." 1 Cor. xii. 6.

In the exposition we have given of David's account of his conversion, the reader will probably have noticed, that the exact order of the text has not been followed, and that a distinctness has been given to the three stages of conversion —"conviction of sin, striving, and rejoicing in hope"— which they do not possess in the Psalm itself. As already remarked, these several stages of progress, though logically distinct, and occurring in a certain order, do not always, nor even often, so present themselves in the conscious experience of the convert." There are "diversities of operations," and to some of the more important of these we will now ask the reader's attention.

I. It is never true,—as might possibly be inferred from the account of the matter already given—that an awakened sinner has done with "conviction of sin" before he begins to "wait upon the Lord." Nor is it true—as many a one imagines ere he learns the contrary from experience—that the convert has done with "conviction of sin" when he begins to "rejoice" in Christ his Saviour.

It is after God has been reconciled to sinning Israel, that Ezekiel tells them—"Then shall ye remember your own evil way, and your doings that were not good, and shall

loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations." Ezek. xxxiv. 31. When Isaiah had long been an honoured prophet of God, a new vision of God's glory led him to cry—"Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips: and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." Isa. vi. 5. We can never have done with "conviction of sin," until we have done with sin itself; and we shall not have done with sin itself, until, "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image." 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Nor is it true that the sinner has done with "waiting upon the Lord," when "a new song is put into his mouth." David giving expression to the purpose of a converted soul, writes—"Thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I *wait* all the day." Ps. xxv. 5. His exhortation to Christians is—"*Wait* on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart; *wait*, I say, upon the Lord." Ps. xxxvii. 14. After conversion, the Christian's growth in knowledge consists chiefly in knowing better the very truths by which his conversion has been effected. Hence it is, that the religious exercises and even the prayers, of the mature Christian, are substantially the same with those which mark the commencement of the Christian life; growth in grace manifesting itself in the fact, that the latter are more simple and more discriminating than the earlier ones.

II. In the order of the text, "waiting upon the Lord" is mentioned before "conviction of sin," by David; and probably it is so mentioned, because on his conversion to God the work seemed to him to begin with his "waiting." Not that there was no "conviction of sin" which preceded his "waiting;" but because the beginnings of his conviction were so slight and indistinct, as to be lost sight of in the deeper and more painful conviction of which he became

the subject, when by his attempt to "wait upon the Lord" in such a way as reason and conscience demanded, he was made to know how utterly ruined and desperately wicked he was.

In the conversion of the jailer at Philippi the case would seem to have been different. His first act of waiting is performed with "trembling;" and is so performed because a deep and pungent conviction of sin was the first of his religious exercises of which he was distinctly conscious.

These two types of religious experience are ever recurring in the kingdom of grace.

The one—in which the person would say of himself:—I have no distinct, certainly no pungent, "conviction of sin." I know that I am a sinner; and I know that I ought to be a Christian. Oh, if I had such convictions as I have known others to have, most gladly would I follow up the matter, and never rest until I did become a Christian. But then the reflection occurs—my lack of conviction does not make me any less a sinner; on the contrary, it is one of the heaviest items in my guiltiness before God. If I sit down idly, expecting such conviction as many have, it may never come; and my soul may be lost in consequence thereof. And thus, the determination is formed—God helping me, I will begin now "to wait upon the Lord." It may be he will hear my "cry," and come and save me. In such a case, the sinner's conversion will seem to himself to have begun in his "waiting patiently for the Lord."

The other—in which the person, under some clear presentation of truth from the pulpit, or some solemn providence of God, or some other such instrumentality, is suddenly awakened; and the first religious exercise of which he is conscious is a painful, alarming conviction of sin; a conviction which sends him trembling to God's minister, or

some Christian friend with the question—"Sir, what must I do to be saved?"

III. In some instances, genuine conversion to God, in the sense in which that term has been defined, is soon accomplished. The midnight earthquake which shook the foundations of the prison at Philippi, found the jailer a careless worldling. The last act of the day before had been to "thrust" the suffering "Paul and Silas into the inner prison, and make their feet fast in the stocks;" and this done, he had laid him down to sleep, undisturbed by concern for their comfort, or any sympathy with them in their sufferings. Before the morning dawned, this same man had "brought them out, and washed their stripes, and been baptized, and having brought them into his house, rejoiced, believing in God." Between midnight and the morning's dawn, his conversion was completed, the Spirit being the witness.

In Paul's case—he, being struck blind by the glorious appearance of the Lord Jesus, just outside the gate of Damascus, and brought "trembling and astonished, to ask, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" is directed to go to a certain house in the city, and there await the answer. And being led thither by his attendants, he remained "*three days*, without sight, fasting and praying," before Ananias is sent to him, and his sight restored, and he "being baptized," begins to rejoice in Christ as his Saviour.

In David's case, a much longer time would seem to have elapsed between his awakening and his beginning to sing the "new song." His words—"I waited *patiently* for the Lord," clearly imply that he waited for a much longer time than either the jailer or Paul, before "the Lord inclined unto him, and heard his cry, and brought him up out of the horrible pit, and the miry clay, and put a new song into his mouth." Just how long he waited we cannot even conjecture,—but, evidently, David's was a case of waiting,

sometimes called *gradual*, as contra-distinguished from *sudden* conversion. The same diversity in this particular, which appears in the recorded experience of God's saints of old, is to be met with in the religious experience of converts at the present day.

IV. There is great diversity in Christian experience, as to the distinctness with which the convert can mark the progress of his conversion to God.

In the case of the jailer of Philippi, there can be little difficulty in fixing the time when he was first "convinced of sin." He was aroused by the earthquake, and "was about to kill himself," when he heard the voice of Paul—"Do thyself no harm; for we are all here,"—and immediately, "he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas." And there can be as little difficulty in fixing the time when he first began to "rejoice in hope." The Spirit makes the record—"And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway,—and he *rejoiced, believing in God.*" Such, in substance, is the experience of some of God's people at the present day.

In other cases, and cases far more numerous, we believe, those who give scriptural evidence that they are indeed Christians cannot pretend to fix the exact time when their saving "conviction of sin" commenced; much less can they fix the exact time when they were "born again." "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," (Prov. iv. 18,) writes Solomon; and just as gradually as the light of day breaks in upon the darkness of earth, just so gradually does light from heaven often break in upon the benighted soul.

No. 226.

THE CONVERTED SAILOR.

BY THE REV. CHARLES J. JONES,

PASTOR OF THE MARINERS' CHURCH, N. Y.

A FEW months ago, a German sailor, who had been well educated in his own country, but who, in consequence of his ignorance of the English, was compelled to hold a subordinate position on board an American merchant vessel, resolved to devote the money he had earned to the acquisition of our language. To this end, having counselled with prudence and economy, he determined to spend a few months at some country school. With him, to plan was to execute, and a few hours after the decision was made, he turned his face eastward and travelled on, till he brought up in one of the fishing towns of Cape Cod. Here he found a quiet, industrious people, whose occupations and whose lives were congenial to his own, and he resolved to stay. Having secured board in a private family in which the school-teacher boarded, he soon became acquainted with him, and, in short, occupied the same room with him, and a seat in his school. His coming into the town was not wholly unnoticed; inquiries were set on foot concerning the stranger. Who was he? Where did he come from? What did he want? What countryman was he? But as he was a stranger to all, these questions remained, for a time at least, unanswered. He was well-dressed, gentlemanly in his bearing, and withal had money to meet his necessities, and the people were not unwilling to make his acquaintance.

One thing was soon learned from the associations he formed, viz.: that he was not one of the people of God; that he had no interest in the Gospel of Christ; and while some were concerned only for his temporal well-being, there was one at least who cared for his soul. She saw the "new scholar" in the House of God on the Sabbath, and became interested sufficiently in the stranger to inquire of the scholars something

of his history. She learned that he was a German, and she conceived the idea of reaching him through his mother tongue. But here a difficulty arose. There was no Tract Depository there. Nor could a German Bible be found in the whole place. But faith like Mary's is not overcome by difficulty. After diligent search through the town, our youthful missionary succeeded in finding, in the language of the stranger, a little unpretending eight paged tract. How came it there? He who saw the end from the beginning, sent that little winged messenger into a town where no one understood its strange characters, and suffered it to lie there, until *he* came for whose soul's salvation it was prepared. Little Mary secured her treasure, and bore it joyfully to her home, big with the intent to do her Master's work. She had learned, young as she was, that duty is ours, and results are God's; and she waited with trembling anticipation the providence that was to throw her in the way of the man to whom it would become intelligible.

The opportunity was not long in presenting itself. The Sabbath came again, and with it the sailor came to church. As the throng of worshippers were leaving the sanctuary, Mary threw herself into the current, and was soon beside the bronzed sailor, into whose horny hand she timidly thrust the silent messenger, and then hasted to her home, in the consciousness of having made one effort for the salvation of a soul, and prayed to her Father in heaven to give efficacy to the simple means. Nor was the effort entirely unappreciated. The tract was taken home and laid upon the table, and soon attracted the attention of the teacher, who having paid some slight attention to the German, began to spell out the title "Bob the Cabin Boy." On discovering its character, he threw it down, and exclaimed, "Pshaw! you are not going to read that. It is religious." The sailor said, "Oh, yes! I will read it. Mary, the minister's daughter, gave it to me;" and suiting the action to the

word, he began to read. As he read, his interest increased, and he laid it down with regret when he finished. It had touched his heart, and he read it again and again.

At night when he retired, he again picked up this little tract—the only thing in that place that spoke to him in his mother tongue, and called up the remembrance of his mother's prayers. His life passed in review before him; he saw himself a sinner. But in the absence of the Bible, he turned again to his tract, and in an agony of grief imitated "Bob the Cabin Boy," and poured out his soul before God, with strong crying and tears, till He who giveth liberally to all men and "upbraideth not," assured him that his sins were laid on Jesus, the Lamb of God, and his soul rejoiced in God his Saviour.

It was now his turn to act the missionary, and he became the teacher, while the teacher, his room-mate, sat at his feet and listened to the wondrous story as it flowed in loving accents from the loosened tongue of his changed pupil. The result showed the power of truth, and the efficacy of prayer. The teacher became a child of God, gave up his school at the end of the term, and entered Bowdoin College to fit himself for future usefulness, if God shall accept him in the Gospel ministry.

This, in substance, is the story of the sailor himself, who, a few days ago, called upon the writer, to tell—as hundreds of other sailors have done within the last five years—what God had done for his soul.

One fact that adds greatly to the interest of this narrative, is, that this man of the sea speaks and reads in many languages. The writer requested him to enumerate them, they are as follows: German, Polish, Lithuanian, Russian, Dutch, Flemish, Portuguese, and English, which, with most of the above, he now *reads* and *writes* intelligibly. In answer to the inquiry, "Now what can you do in all these languages?" He replied, while the tear of joy gathered in his eyes,

"I can tell in ALL these languages what Christ has done for my soul. And, by the grace of God, I will do so as long as I live."

He has gone forth again upon the waters, not any longer a careless blasphemer, but as a missionary of the Cross of Christ, a "living Epistle, to be known and read of all men."

A few days since, the writer received from him a letter, written in English, from one of our Southern ports, which shows that he has entered upon his Master's work. He says, after describing a severe gale, in which the crew were alarmed, and he was filled with the peace of God: "My shipmates asked me if I belonged to the Church. I told them, 'Yes, I do.' I need not tell you what sort of questions I had to answer. I really do not know whether I succeeded in answering them all correctly or not; but I tried all I could to keep on the Lord's side, and told him all my feelings. And as I told you, I have given myself up to him, and am not growing weary in well doing, and in loving him. Christ is my Captain. I steer by the compass of God's Word, and strive to keep on the straight course to the heavenly country." Here are eight missionaries in one man; who shall measure his influence or estimate the results of his conversion?

Reader, are you doing anything for the sons of the sea? Say not, "I cannot reach them." They are accessible to kindness, and armed with a simple tract, you may break through the barrier of caste and language, until the soul's outward defences of prejudice and hatred of the truth, shall fall before your simple faith, as the walls of Jericho at the sound of the Levites' horn. Imitate little Mary. Drop a tract in the hard hand, and a soft word of kindness and sympathy in the ear, and by God's grace you shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

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No. 227.

HOW WAS JESUS BAPTIZED?

THERE are two answers given to this question. The first is that given by our Baptist brethren, that he was immersed in Jordan: the second is, that he was baptized in the way that similar baptisms were prescribed by the law, *i. e.*, sprinkled with running water by a hyssop branch, or with the hand. Which of these opinions is correct, is a fair subject for calm and candid enquiry.

Was he immersed? We cannot think so for several reasons. (1.) This was not the mode prescribed by the law for such purifications. There was not a solitary instance in which immersion of the whole body was prescribed in the Old Testament. Washings and bathings were required, sometimes of the whole body, but these were, not only, not necessarily immersions, but probably never so. Such ablutions were commonly performed among the Orientals by pouring water over the person, not by plunging it into the water. So it is to this day in Turkish and Oriental baths. And such total ablutions were always in private. Public acts of purification were never total ablutions, and never in any case by immersing the body in water. Why should there be a departure from the usual mode in this case?

(2.) The circumstances of the case create an additional improbability. It is said that all Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan came and were baptized of him. There were probably five millions of people included in this district of country, and if but a small fraction of them were immersed by John during the nine months of his ministry, it would have been a miracle. If they were baptized according to the ordinary Jewish law of purification, the thing is possible; if immersed, it is impossible, except on the supposition of a constant miracle. Nor is this all. Even in our days of baptisteries and gutta percha garments, it would be difficult to immerse such vast crowds without painful and unseemly scenes. But to suppose that the Jews, with their more rigid notions in regard to the intercourse of the sexes, would allow men and women to be immersed, in open day, where there was no shelter, no way of changing wet and dripping garments, or avoiding

dangerous or disagreeable exposures, is to suppose a thing so violently improbable as to require the plainest proof before we can admit it. Now as there is no such proof in the word itself, describing the ordinance, we infer that a mode so unusual and inconvenient, to say the least of it, under these circumstances, could not have been the mode adopted by the Baptist.

How then was he baptized? And why at the Jordan, unless to be immersed? And why did John always baptize at a river, except to immerse? These are pertinent questions, and their answer will be approached by asking another. Why did the Apostles not follow John's example? Why did he always seek a river or stream of water, whilst they never did, but baptized in the house, the prison, the way side, the temple, or wherever they happened to be? The reason for this difference of practice must be found in some difference in the two baptisms. That difference happens to be precisely the one that explains this difference of practice. John's baptism was a legal purification, preparatory to the setting up of the New Dispensation, and hence must be governed by the law of purifications. Christian baptism, not being a legal ceremony, was not governed by this law, and hence might differ in some respects from the former. Now as the legal purifications had to be performed with running water, John was compelled to baptize where such water was easily accessible, whilst the Christian baptizers were placed under no such restriction. Hence it was that he always baptized with the water of a running stream, whilst they are never represented as seeking any such place to perform the ordinance. All these points are susceptible of clear proof, and being proved, they settle the matter beyond contradiction.

1. John's baptism was a *purification*. This appears from John iii. 25, 26. "Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." Here "a question about purifying" was a question about his baptism, proving unanswerably that his baptism was regarded as a purification. He affirms the same thing himself in Matt. iii. 11, 12, when comparing his water-

baptism with the fire-baptism of the Messiah, he declares that by it the coming One shall "throughly *purge* his floor."

If then a baptism by fire is a purification by fire, a baptism by water is a purification by water. These religious lustrations were very familiar to the Jewish mind, for they were daily performed in their persons, garments, utensils, furniture, &c., and had a definite significance. Hence when John, a man of priestly lineage, came forth on a Divine warrant, to call the Jewish church to a great national act of repentance, humiliation, and purification, that they might be prepared for the coming of Messiah, he only required *that* as an extraordinary act, that for thirty generations had been done as an ordinary act of religious ceremony, that is, apply water externally to symbolize this internal act and state of preparation. Taken in this light it was simple, significant, and solemn in a very high degree.

2. It was a legal purification, *i. e.*, one that must be governed by the Old Testament laws on this subject. This follows from the fact that the Mosaic dispensation was still binding, and hence if this purification was lawful at all, it must be regulated by the yet unrepealed laws of the Mosaic institute. This point is too plain for elaborate argument.

3. These legal purifications were always performed by running water, sprinkled on the unclean subject, and usually with a hyssop branch. Although there were "divers baptisms" in the law, some by blood, some by ashes, and some in other ways, yet the two principal ones were those of the water of separation, and the purification of the leper. Both these were performed in the manner stated. (*a.*) *The water of separation.* This was the main ordinance of purification under the law, and applied to the various kinds of ceremonial uncleanness that were daily contracted by persons, cups, pots, brazen vessels, couches, garments and other things. It is called *baptism* in the Septuagint and in the New Testament. This water was prepared by using the ashes of a red heifer, significant of atonement for sin by sacrifice in the way described in Numbers xix. 17, 18, "And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or

one slain, or one dead, or a grave." That it was this sprinkling of the water that constituted the purification, appears from the repeated statements, (v. 13 and 20,) that the person is unclean "because the water of separation hath not been sprinkled on him!" This being the great and common ordinance of purification, it of course was the natural model for John in his great national purifying before the coming of Messiah. (*b.*) *The purification of the leper.* This was done in the same way. Lev. xiv. 5–7. "The priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel, over *running water.* As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the *running water*, and he shall *sprinkle* upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean."

The same process was to be repeated as to a leprous house, vs. 50, 52. The blood of one bird was to be mingled with running water, to symbolize atonement by the blood of the great sacrifice, and this water thus prepared being sprinkled on the leprous person or house, they were clean.

These being the two great baptismal purifications of the law, it is surely fair to infer that John would perform his purification in the same way, and not adopt a mode unknown to the law, unusual, inconvenient, and objectionable on several accounts. Hence we infer that he, like the other priests under the law, would take a hyssop branch, and dipping it in the running water of the Jordan, or some other flowing stream, would sprinkle the penitent crowds who came to his ministry, as the priest sprinkled the leper and the defiled person, and would tell them of that Divine baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, which should descend in their purifying power from heaven, and being poured on them from above, should carry away every stain of defilement, and leave them clean from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. We infer therefore with the most unanswerable clearness, that Jesus was baptized in this way, and therefore not by immersion, but by the sprinkling, pouring, or affusion of the water of Jordan on his head, and then by the descent of the fiery symbol of the Holy Ghost, gently as a dove, and yet bright and pure as that great Agent of purification who was thus represented.

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No. 228.

HINTS TO PROFESSORS.

A PASTORAL LETTER.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—You are a professor of the name and the faith of Jesus Christ. Let me appeal to you affectionately in that sacred name whether you realize the solemn nature of the profession you have made.

Do you *feel what it is to be a Christian?* And do you feel the dreadful danger there is, in being deceived in this most momentous of all questions? If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. (2 Cor. v. 17.) To be a Christian is not to be baptized in the name of Christ; it is not to make a profession of religion; it is not to go to the house of God and gather with his people around the table of our Lord; it is not by any outward rites done *to* you, nor by any acts of your own done *for* you. To be a Christian is to be born again by the power of the Spirit of God—to be new created in Christ Jesus. No person can experience this work of the Holy Spirit without a great change. It must lead to new views, new feelings, new purposes, and a new life. Old things pass away; all things become new. *Has this vital, radical change taken place with you?* Have you views of the character of God, such as the unrenewed do not have—of his glorious holiness, of his perfect justice, of his absolute sovereignty in the salvation of sinners, and of his infinite mercy to the chief of sinners in Jesus Christ?

And what think you of Christ? Are your views of him

those that the Spirit gives in the new creation? Is he to you God manifest in the flesh? Is he a Saviour who as Divine, as very God, has a right to say unto you, "Thy sins are forgiven thee?" And is he one who as the Son of man has laid down his life for you, dying for you, the just for the unjust, that he might bring you to God? Is your only hope of salvation in the vicarious sacrifice, the complete atonement, the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ? Looking wholly and for ever away from yourself as in any way or degree meriting eternal life, do you lay your hand upon the head of the Lamb of God, and trust him to bear and to take away all your guilt?

And what are your views of the Holy Spirit? Do you truly regard him as a distinct Person of the ever blessed Trinity—the sole Author of your regeneration, if you have been regenerated—the Applier of the redemption of Christ—the Enlightener of every spiritual mind—the Author of faith—the Sanctifier, Comforter, and Guide of all the people of God?

And are your views of sin, and of yourself personally as a sinner, such as the natural man cannot receive? Do you feel that there is resting upon *you*, if out of Christ, the awful weight of sin and guilt that rests upon the race, and from which there is no deliverance but by the redemption of Christ? Is your sense of sin such as compels you to feel your absolute necessity of the mercy of God, the blood of Christ, and the power of the Holy Ghost to deliver you?

Have your views of the world changed? Is it to you the false and fading and unsubstantial thing it once was not?

Are its pleasures and its sorrows—its riches and its wants —its honours and its scorn, at once and equally to you the passing shadows that flit across your pathway to eternity? And do the realities of the world to come rise before you, and by an ever present power strengthen you to run with patience the race set before you? Do you live, ever remembering that there is a judgment, a heaven, a hell, an eternity? *Do you live above the world;* with your affections fixed on things above and not on things on the earth? Is your heart so stayed on God, your faith so fixed on Christ, that if this night should be your last, you could rejoice to lie down and die?

Once more, *are you faithful to the church with which you are connected?* Do you love your church? Do you pray for her welfare? Do you labour for her peace and prosperity? Do you uphold the hands of your pastor by your prayers, your works, and especially by your regular presence upon the services of the house of God? Do you make it a point of conscience and principle to attend all the regular services of your own church, when the providence of God does not prevent you? In every church there are liable to be wandering stars—persons carried about by every wind of doctrine, ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth. Let it not be so with you. Being rooted and grounded in faith and love, may you grow up unto the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

Are you faithful in your closet in the daily study of the word of God, and in secret prayer? If the head of a family, is there a family altar in your house where you offer up the morning and evening sacrifice, and train your children for

heaven? Do you meet with your pastor and your fellow Christians in the weekly prayer meetings of your church, to unite your supplications with theirs for the constant presence and power of the Holy Ghost? and is your life before the world that which glorifies your Father in heaven? Can men take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus?

Oh! be not deceived in this great matter. Remember that many who have professed the name of Christ on earth shall stand at his left hand in the judgment. *What if you should be with them!* Oh! think of it; think of it as a matter of eternity; think of it, especially, if you have been resting on a false foundation, as a matter of possibility; and give now all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. The time is short; the end of all things to you is at hand; whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, in settling this awful question of your eternal destiny, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest. You will bear me witness that I have but one desire for you in this thing; it is that you may be presented, at last, faultless before the presence of God with exceeding joy. If this shall be the result, I shall be satisfied; if not, I would wash my hands of your blood. That God may give you grace to be faithful unto death, that you, with all the redeemed of Christ, may receive the crown of life, is the prayer of

YOUR AFFECTIONATE PASTOR.

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No. 229.

ARE INFANTS ELECTED?

EXTRACTED FROM "THE GREAT SUPPER," BY THE REV. A. G. FAIRCHILD, D. D.

It is objected, that Election involves the doctrine of "infant damnation."

On the contrary it furnishes the only ground on which the salvation of infants can be consistently maintained; for if those who die in infancy are chosen to eternal life, then we have the strongest possible assurance of their final happiness. On the other hand if, as some Anti-Calvinists argue, infants are not elect to salvation, they cannot be of that happy number which Christ will finally gather to his heavenly kingdom. Matt. xxiv. 31. These brethren, however, in their lively concern for our *orthodoxy*, complain of a passage in our Confession, ch. 10, sec. 3, which says, "Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ, through the Spirit." From this they argue "that if some who die in infancy are elect, others who die in infancy are reprobate." But this is a gross error, founded upon a misapprehension of the scriptural application of the term "elect." This term, when used with reference to salvation, does not signify chosen out of a particular *age* or *class*, but out of the general mass of mankind. Thus, when John, addressing the "elect lady," speaks of her "*elect sister*," (2 John v. 13,) we are not to conclude with our good brethren, that she must have had also a *reprobate* sister, but that the sister was one of those who were elect out of the fallen family of Adam. Also, when the phrase "elect children of God" occurs in sermons or writings, we do not understand it as implying that there are also *reprobate* children of God. Accord-

ingly, our Confession of Faith uniformly uses the word "elect" in its true scriptural sense, to signify chosen out of the whole race of fallen men. When it speaks of infants dying in infancy as *elect*, its obvious meaning is, that they are elected out of the whole mass of human beings; and this is perfectly consistent with the opinion that all who die in infancy are chosen to salvation.

Let us now inquire whether the public standards of other denominations are more *orthodox* on this point than ours. The Methodist Discipline, under the head of "ministration of baptism to infants," directs the minister to pray that the infant to be baptized, "may ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children." Ch. 3, sec. 2. Of course if the infant be in the number of the elect, it must itself be elect—an *elect infant*. Here then is the doctrine of "infant election" in all its length and breadth. I will add, what is not perhaps generally known to the world, that the great founder of Methodism in his treatise on Infant Baptism, published by the General Conference, boldly avows the sentiment that infants cannot ordinarily be saved without baptism. "If," says he, "infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism; seeing, in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved, unless this be washed away by baptism. It has already been proved," he adds, "that this original stain cleaves to every child of man; and that hereby they are children of wrath and liable to eternal damnation." *Doct. Tracts*, p. 251. Still further on, in summing up his argument, Mr. Wesley urges that "outward baptism is generally, in an ordinary way, necessary to salvation," and that "infants may be saved, as well as adults." He adds, "Nor ought we to neglect any means of saving them." p. 259. From this reasoning the inference is unavoidable that infants dying without baptism, *ordinarily* at least, suffer eternal damnation. The very thought of this is enough to make any one shudder! But it is

not so much my object to convict our Methodist brethren of holding "infant damnation," as to show with what an ill grace charges of that kind are preferred against others, by members of their communion.

Our Cumberland brethren in their Confession of Faith, chap. 10, sec. 3, admit the salvation of infants; and yet in section 1, of the same chapter, limit the blessings of eternal life to "those whom God calls, and who obey the call, and *those only;*" from which number infants are necessarily excluded.* Nor do they recognize the election of infants; but on the contrary affirm that none are elect "in a saving sense," but those who are "enlightened in the knowledge of God," and have "spiritual wisdom to discern and detect deceivers." *Conf. Faith, ch.* 3, *Note.* May I not suggest, that as their own public standards leave this subject so much in the dark, they should be somewhat cautious in charging others with excluding infants from the blessedness of heaven?

Let me now ask the opponents of infant election, what they will do with those who die in infancy, if they are not the "elect of God?" Will they people the realms of glory with the *reprobate?* Will they have it that the Lord Jesus will gather the *non-elect* to his heavenly kingdom? Ah! this doctrine of infant election is a serious annoyance to our brethren. They can neither deny nor admit its truth, without involving themselves in inextricable difficulties. If they admit that they are chosen to salvation, then they must at once admit the doctrine of gratuitous, unconditional election, with all its tremendous consequences. For if infants are elect unto salvation, it cannot be pretended that they were elected on account of foreseen faith or works, or any other good thing in the

* Old Arminian divines, as Episcopius, Curcellæus, and others, contended that infants in a future world, though saved from the pains of hell, would always remain in an infantine state, and thus be incapable of enjoying the blessedness of heaven. See Ridgely, vol. 2, pp. 139, 140.

creature. I say, if God has chosen them to life and glory, he must have chosen them "according to the counsel of his own will," and prompted by his own spontaneous mercy. Here, then, is a part of mankind, comprising at least one fourth of the species, dying in infancy, and all subjects of free, sovereign, gratuitous election! Let us ask these brethren, Why does God take one infant to heaven, while as yet it is unstained with actual sin, and leave another to grow up in impenitence, to become polluted with crime, and sink at last under his fearful displeasure? What is this but sovereign, discriminating mercy, exerted to the utmost extent ever contended for by the most rigid Calvinist? Let me repeat the question: Why is one taken to glory in infancy, and another, born on the same day, spared to old age only to treasure up wrath against a day of wrath? Truly our Anti-Calvinist brethren cannot admit this doctrine of the election of infants, without involving their whole scheme in absolute ruin.

Again: these brethren are compelled to admit that infants cannot be saved without regeneration. But look for a moment at the consequences of such admission by Anti-Calvinists. Ask them the question, What if an infant should die before regeneration? "Oh," they will reply, "infants cannot die before they are regenerated." Why, then, it follows that the unregenerated part of our species are immortal while in a state of infancy! Let no one start at this, for it is the only ground on which these brethren can resist the damnation of infants,—the immortality of the unregenerate while they are infants! The Calvinist easily avoids this appalling difficulty, since he holds that God has fore-ordained the salvation of infants, and consequently has ordained all the means necessary to its accomplishment. Thus their election secures their regeneration.

I am aware that some individuals have long been labouring to produce the impression that our church teaches the doctrine of "infant damnation." I say,

some individuals, for I will not suppose that the great body of any Christian denomination are willing to countenance so wicked a slander. It has often been proved, and is well understood by the intelligent part of the community, that the Presbyterians do not now and never did maintain that doctrine. Nor, indeed, has there ever existed a Calvinistic body who maintained it.* Yet in opposition to the clearest evidence, these individuals either secretly or openly, by cowardly insinuation, or by confident assertion, labour to fix this stigma upon the members of our communion. No means are left untried to effect their object. So systematically and extensively has this sort of calumny been practised, in some parts of our country, that not a single Calvinistic minister can escape it by the most public and explicit disavowals. Certain individuals can be found who are willing to say they have heard him preach, "that there are infants in hell not a span long." Now, my friends, we must regard all this as an evidence of a persecuting spirit. As these men cannot wield the civil power against us, they will do what they can to punish us for holding doctrines which they cannot overthrow by fair and manly argument. God only knows the extent to which we might have to suffer for our religion, were it not for the protection of the laws! For if men will propagate the most wilful and deliberate untruths against us, as they certainly do, for no other offence than an honest difference of religious belief, what would they not do, if their power were equal to their wickedness? Presbyterians, however, can look beyond the agency of evil men, to the supreme Disposer of all events, and say with David, when Shimei cursed and cast stones at

* More than two centuries ago, when the Calvinists were accused by their Arminian opponents of holding "that infants are torn away from the breasts of their mothers, and tyrannically precipitated into hell," the charge was indignantly repelled by the Synod of Dort. See the conclusion of their *Articles*.

him, "Let them alone, for the Lord hath bidden them."*

* When the charge of teaching "infant damnation" is propagated by persons of any influence in society, the credit of religion may sometimes require the prompt exposure of the guilty author. This has been done in several instances of recent occurrence. Among others, an Anti-Calvinist preacher publicly asserted in Blairsville, Pa. that he had heard the Rev. John Walker, of New Athens, Ohio, preach "that there were infants in hell not a span long." Professor Walker, having been written to on the subject, says, in his reply; "I am sorry to be under the necessity of asserting that if Mr. ——or any other person, did say, that he, or they heard me say, that any infant was damned, or that there were children in hell not a span long, it is a wilful and deliberate falsehood; and that for the credit of the religious society to which he belongs, they should call him to account," &c. *Blairsville Record, July 24th*, 1844.

A few years since an Anti Calvinist minister asserted in Clarksburg, Va., "that he had left the Presbyterian church on account of infant damnation; that the Presbyterians were *bound* to believe that doctrine, and that he knew hundreds that did believe it." The pastor of the Presbyterian church promptly called on him to furnish the name of at least one individual, out of the hundreds, who entertained such a belief. This, the preacher, notwithstanding the most earnest and pressing solicitations, declined doing. Thus the slander was happily arrested.

Quite recently another Anti-Calvinist preacher asserted in Connelsville, Pa. that the Rev. Mr. G. had, on a specified occasion, avowed his belief in "infant damnation." On inquiry it was ascertained that Mr. G. *had expressed no opinion on the subject.*

Some propagators of this slander guard themselves as far as possible against the danger of exposure by bringing the accusation always against some deceased minister. We presume this is done on the principle that the dead cannot defend themselves.

AN OBJECTION ANSWERED.

"An objection strongly urged against the views I am unfolding, is founded upon the Scripture doctrine of election. It is alleged that God, in delivering fallen men from sin and condemnation, proceeds on the principle of selection—that, irrespective of character, or desert, or external circumstances, he chooses some and passes by others—that his choice is represented as embracing, not all without exception comprehended in any particular class, but individuals belonging to every class—and, that those who die in infancy, being a distinct and immensely numerous section of the human family, God deals with them as he does with the different communities and nations of the earth: "he has mercy on whom he will have mercy."

"Admitting that God does proceed on the principle of selection, in framing and carrying into effect the scheme of redemption, those who die in infancy cannot, in the proper sense of the term, be considered a distinct class. They are taken from the entire human race, and belong to "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." And I should imagine that divine sovereignty is as really exercised in fixing upon the families, and the individual or individuals, in each of these families, who are to be removed from this world by death, and conveyed to the mansions of glory in early childhood, as it is in calling to the faith and hope of the gospel those who are ordained to eternal life, from the mighty mass of accountable agents dead in trespasses and sins. The principle of selection is not less strikingly apparent in the one case than it is

fully the great leading doctrines of the Word of God. The unity of the Godhead, and the trinity of persons therein—the utter depravity and helplessness of mankind in consequence of the fall—the recovery and salvation of the Church by the Redeemer—the Incarnation of the Son of God, his Atonement, and all his mediatorial work and offices—the work of the Holy Spirit in the Conversion and Sanctification of the sinner—the sinner's interest in the finished work of Christ, and his Justification by Faith alone—the Second Advent of Christ to Judgment—the Resurrection of the dead and the eternal separation of the righteous and the wicked—these are among the truths embodied in the Confession and Catechisms of our Church, taught in her schools, and preached from her pulpits. And our Church has specially been privileged to maintain the truths relating to the deep things of God;—the covenant of redemption entered into by Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, before the foundation of the world; the salvation-blessings secured in Christ as covenant head and surety, and flowing down to the Church through him; the communication of these covenant-blessings by the Holy Spirit, together with the whole doctrines of free grace,—the sovereign, distinguishing, free grace of God.—(Eph. i. 3, 4, 5; 2 Tim. i. 9; 1 Cor. iii. 11; Eph. ii. 8.)

THIRD REASON.

I AM A PRESBYTERIAN—because the form of Church Government, which we call Presbytery, is founded on the Word of God. The office-bearers in our Church are Scriptural in their offices and authority. In each

of our congregations there is a Minister, whose special office it is to preach the Word and dispense the Sacraments. There is no difference of rank among these Ministers or Presbyters. All are equal as brethren, having one Master and King, even the Lord Jesus.—(Matt. xxiii. 8, 9, 10.) This is what we mean by Presbyterian parity. All our ministers are alike bishops or overseers, not of other ministers but of their own flocks; not prelates but pastors, as in apostolical times.

In our Presbyterian Churches, besides the minister, there are others whose office it is to aid in the oversight and government of the Church, in visiting the sick, and other spiritual superintendence of the people. These are usually termed "the Elders of the Church;" or sometimes Ruling Elders or Presbyters, (1 Tim. v. 17,) to distinguish them from the Pastors or preaching Presbyters, "who labour in word and doctrine." And lastly, there are Deacons (Acts vi.), whose special office it is to care for the poor, and superintend those arrangements which promote the outward comfort of the congregation.

These three orders of office bearers are all that we believe to be permanent in the Church of Christ. That "Bishop" is only another name for "Presbyter," and that there were not two distinct orders signified by these names, is proved by many parts of the Word of God. When Paul called the Elders (Presbyters) of the Ephesian Church, he charged them to take heed to the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers (Bishops).—(Acts xx. 17—28.) So also Peter, in his 1st Epistle, ch. v. 1.—"The Elders who

are among you I exhort, who am also an Elder." Having therefore no sanction of Divine authority, nor apostolic usage, whence come Diocesan Bishops, Archbishops, Deans, Archdeacons, Lords Spiritual, Cardinals, or Pope, in the Church of Christ? Are these successors of the men whom Jesus called unto him and said, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you." "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

FOURTH REASON.

I AM A PRESBYTERIAN—because there is no form of Church Government that so combines the two great principles, Order and Liberty—the Order of Government, and the Liberty of the People.

The government is conducted by the office-bearers in individual churches, who constitute what we call Church Sessions; by the office-bearers of a number of churches, who form what we call Presbyteries; and by the office-bearers of a still greater number of churches, forming Synods or General Assemblies. A Church Session consists of the minister and the elders of a congregation; a Presbytery, of ministers and representative elders of several churches; and a Synod or Assembly, of ministers and elders of churches in a larger district or province.—(Acts xv.) In countries where the number of Presbyterian Churches is very great, the Assemblies are composed of representative ministers and elders chosen by each Presbytery. In all cases, Presbyteries and Synods consist of ministers

and elders in equal numbers, deliberating and voting together. The Moderator or President of these Courts holds office only for a definite period, and is appointed sometimes by election, and sometimes by rotation. By these several and successive Church Courts, mature deliberation, impartial justice, and ecclesiastical order are secured. In cases of difficulty reference may be made, and advice sought, and in dispute appeal may be taken from the Session to the Presbytery, and from the Presbytery to the Synod or Assembly of the Church.

Every congregation is free and independent in its local government and discipline, in the election of its office-bearers, in devising and executing its plans of Christian usefulness, and in the whole management of its affairs, so long as its acts are not inconsistent with the general rules and with the common weal of the Church. In all good government, civil or ecclesiastical, there is some central authority to confirm and regulate local liberty. This superintendence is exercised by each Presbytery over the several congregations within its bounds, and Presbyteries are under the control of Synods, and Synods are responsible to the General Assembly, in which the supreme power, legislative and executive, is vested.

FIFTH REASON.

I AM A PRESBYTERIAN—because I know of no Church that so secures the rights and privileges of the Christian people. The people, that is, the members of the Church, choose their pastor, their elders, and deacons. Those only can be chosen and called to the pastoral

charge of our congregations who have been educated under the superintendence of some Presbytery, and been admitted, after examination and trials, as probationers of the Church; all means being used to provide a well qualified and suitable ministry for the supply of our Church.

The people also manage all ecclesiastical affairs; and they do so in the only wise and practicable way among large bodies of men—by representative government.

If all the members of the Church are alike rulers, to whom are these Divine precepts addressed, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves" (Heb. xiii. 17); and, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour?"—(1 Tim. v. 17.)

In those Congregational Churches which act without representation, matters of business continually occur which cannot without inconvenience, and cases of discipline which cannot without impropriety, be discussed before a public Meeting; and for the most part the conducting of affairs by the whole Church is only nominal; a few individuals having the real authority and management. Now what is elsewhere done by "committees" and "managers" is done in the Presbyterian Churches by an authorized and responsible court, the Church Session, composed of the minister and elders chosen by the people, transacting affairs in their behalf.

SIXTH REASON.

I AM A PRESBYTERIAN—because I know of no Church

whose form of worship is so simple and so scriptural. Not any other book but God's book is made to claim the attention of the people. Every Sabbath-day the word of God is read, expounded, and applied. In the devotional services, those who cannot worship the Father in spirit, will find no substitute of form and ceremony to delude them. There is a consent of all our Churches in those things that contain the substance of the service and worship of God: but the public prayers are not restricted to a written form, as if from Sabbath to Sabbath, and from year to year, there never could arise any variety in the wants, the desires, the circumstances of sinful men, as if there were not constantly new subjects of thanksgiving to God, new requests to be made known to our Father in heaven. The word of God is my prayer-book, and I find in the book of Psalms, in the Epistles, and other parts of the Bible, examples and forms of prayer, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. In other matters there is that variety in public worship, according to local usage and other circumstances, which Christian liberty allows, and Christian prudence dictates, in things external and non-essential.

SEVENTH REASON.

I AM A PRESBYTERIAN—because the Sacraments are in our Church administered agreeably to the word of God. We baptize adults on profession of their faith in Christ, and we baptize the infants of such as are members of the visible Church.—(Acts xvi. 33; Gen. xvii. 7, with Coloss. ii. 11, 12; 1 Cor. vii. 14.) In

the dispensation of the Lord's supper we do not kneel before an altar, but we sit at the Lord's table, receiving the sacramental bread and wine in the customary posture of men who celebrate a feast, as Christ and his disciples set the example. We have no altar in our Churches, because the sacrament of the supper is not a sacrifice, but an ordinance commemorative of the one sacrifice of Christ. The admission of members to the Lord's supper is after examination and warning and instruction as to the nature and objects of the ordinance.—(1 Cor. xi. 26—28.)

EIGHTH REASON.

I AM A PRESBYTERIAN—because I love and pray for unity; not uniformity at the expense of truth, but unity based on truth and charity. Our Presbyterian Church has its congregations knit together in mutual dependence and sympathy, as one body in the unity of the Spirit, having one Lord and Head, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. And all are united under one superintendence and government, holding the same standards, and maintaining the same principles, the strong helping and bearing the burden of the weak, the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel. We thus enjoy a visible, as well as a spiritual unity, according to the scriptural idea of the Church, the body of Christ.—(Ephes. iv. 8—16.)

NINTH REASON.

I AM A PRESBYTERIAN—because the Church of

Christ was Presbyterian in her earliest and purest times. Ecclesiastical history tells me by what steps came the predicted falling away from apostolical doctrine and order (2 Thess. ii. 3); how the primitive Episcopacy (which we still hold) was supplanted by Prelacy and Popery; and how those Churches which were God's faithful witnesses in the midst of the Anti-Christian apostasy, the Waldensian, the Albigensian, and other martyr-Churches were Presbyterian. And when the time of Reformation came, when men stood, and saw, and asked for the ancient paths, then the good old way of Presbyterianism, with its Evangelical truth, its apostolical order, its wholesome discipline, and primitive worship, was with one consent resumed by the Reformed Churches. In England alone it was not so; but for this we satisfactorily account in the assumption of the headship of the Church by Henry VIII.—the indecision of Cranmer and the early Reformers—the limited extent to which the work of Reformation could be carried—together with other later events in England's national history.

Although outward forms in themselves are of minor consequence, yet they are important as means for the building up of the spiritual Church. And if Church history is of any use, we should search it to see which form of Christianity best fulfils the purposes of a Church of Christ. Let Presbyterianism be so tried: contrast the state of the English Church as to vital religion in the Puritan times, and after the restoration of Charles II., and the ejection of the two thousand Nonconformists, nearly all of whom were Presbyterians; contrast the present state of Presbyterian Ulster with

any other province of Ireland; contrast the state of Scotland with any other country of Europe; and every friend of Bible instruction, of Sabbath observance, of true religion, ought to rejoice in the prospect of Presbyterianism being extended in every part of the world.

TENTH REASON.

I AM A PRESBYTERIAN—because I know of no Church that has been so valiant for the truth, or that has been honoured to do and suffer so much for the cause of Christ on earth. None can show a more goodly company of confessors, a more noble army of martyrs, than the Presbyterian Church. Let history testify this, from the earliest times, through the dark ages of Popery, down even to our own day, when the Free Church of Scotland, in her noble stand for truth, and in the sacrifices made by her ministers and people for Christ's sake, has displayed a spirit worthy of olden times, and shown that living faith and high principle are yet to be found on the earth. While maintaining in common with other Protestants the truths relating to the Prophetical and Priestly offices of the Redeemer, the Presbyterian Church has especially been called on to testify and to suffer in defence of the Kingly office of Christ; that he is the only Head of the Church, visible and invisible, (Coloss. i. 16, 17, 18,) that Christ alone is king in Zion—(Psalm ii. 6.) The Bible teaches us to be subject to the powers that be, to render honour to whom honour is due, tribute to whom tribute, to all their dues (Rom. xiii. 1—7), but not to render unto Cæsar the things that are God's—(Matt. xxii. 21.) While contending for spiritual independence

against Erastians on the one hand, we contend against the spiritual supremacy of Papists and Prelatists on the other. Popery has ever found in our Church a stern and uncompromising opponent. She is no less opposed to Arian, Socinian, and other forms of Anti-Christian error. And though some have wrongfully used our name, and some branches of our Church have at times been on the side of error, true Presbyterians have ever been foremost in contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints.

For these and other reasons I am a Presbyterian. While I know that God has his people among different denominations of professing Christians, I prefer the Presbyterian Church, because I believe it to be most conformable to the word of God, most conducive to the spread of truth and righteousness, and most fitted for the extension of the cause of Christ on the earth.

GRACE BE WITH ALL THEM THAT LOVE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN SINCERITY. AMEN.—EPH. vi. 24.

PRESBYTERIANISM THE FRIEND OF LIBERTY.

The Presbyterian system is essentially Republican, and secures to all, both laity and clergy, the rights and privileges which are guarantied in the freest and purest governments on earth. These principles give to the governed a voice in the formation of their own laws or rules of administration, the choice of their

own preachers and other officers, and the right to hold and distribute their own property. How absolutely these principles are opposed by Romanism, and even by some Protestant sects, we need not stay to illustrate. No Presbyterian can be oppressed, unless he agree to oppress himself. All the rights of the humblest member of the church are fully secured; no church can be required to receive an unacceptable minister, nor can any power above the church remove one from his charge while he and his people are satisfied to remain together. No power can require a church to pay its minister any sum but such as it may itself choose to promise. No individual minister or member is above the reach of the discipline and government of the church, as exercised by its constituted judicatories. It is thus at once a scriptural, free, and republican body, in which all its parts are duly arranged, all its duties enforced, and all rights secured.

Hence Presbyterians have ever been, and must be, if they act out their principles, the earnest and zealous advocates of a learned, wise, and pious ministry, and of the general diffusion of education and knowledge among all classes of the people. They can never tolerate for a moment, the Romish dogma, that, "ignorance is the mother of devotion." Here our position needs no proof. Wherever the banner of our religion is unfolded, there beneath its shade are found the school-house and means of instruction. Light, intellectual and religious, is the great instrumentality through which, under God, we hope for the renovation and salvation of the world.—*Presbyterian Advocate.*

No. 231.

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS,

OR

THE WAY OF SALVATION BY GRACE,

PROVED AND ILLUSTRATED FROM ITS LEADING EXAMPLE.

BY E. WURTS.

Luke xxiii. 39—43. "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

DEAR READER, I would have you share with me in the light and comfort I have derived from these words. In my humble judgment, the lesson of truth they were eminently designed to teach has, to some extent at least, been overlooked. Let me ask your kind and candid attention then, to some remarks in exposition of what I conceive to be their true spirit and meaning.

There are passages of Scripture which, by their very position in the word of God—by the circumstances under which they were uttered, show themselves to be of leading importance. They contain truth which it is essential we should know. Of such a character, and eminently such, seems to be the passage now before us. It brings us directly to Mount Calvary—to the great crowning scene of the whole Bible—*the crucifixion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

In that scene the malefactor here spoken of holds indeed a *subordinate*, but still he holds a most conspicuous place. In every view we have of this scene—the crucifixion—we see, not *one*, but *three* persons, lifted up, and hanging on a cross; in the midst of the group our Lord and Saviour, and on either side of him a malefactor. Not only this, but right in the midst of the narrative given us of the Saviour's sufferings, our attention is suspended—it is diverted *from* the Saviour to the brief history of this man, the penitent thief. Plainly, then, even at first view, there must be some important lesson of truth contained in this short history. Not for slight or trivial reasons could our attention be turned, even for a moment, from a dying Saviour to a dying malefactor. What, then, is the lesson taught us by this Scripture?

The leading thought of the passage—one which is familiar to almost every one who knows any thing about the Bible—is that this man, the "thief on the cross," though he had been, all his life time, a sinner, an impenitent sinner, did, in his *dying* hour, seek the Saviour, was snatched from destruction, *saved* on the very brink of eternity. Hence, the usual comment, or lesson drawn from the passage, is that we have here an extreme, a solitary case, the special design of which is to guard us, against presumption on the one side, and despair on the other. The Bible, it is said, gives us *one* example of a man saved in his dying hour, that none might despair, and *but one*, that none might presume.

While this is plainly true, still it is far from being *all* the truth taught in this Scripture. As I think, and hope to show from a brief examination of the record, this passage has a higher, a more special value, for the lesson of truth which it teaches, in regard to the whole plan of salvation, for what it tells us of the power of the cross, the atoning blood of our Saviour. *As* this man was saved, so, to

my view, must we all be saved. Let us, then, from a brief survey of the facts of the case, try to ascertain what it was that saved him; how, on what terms, this man found mercy, and was made the friend of God for all eternity.

And the first thing we are called to notice is, that up to this very period, his dying hour, this man had been not only a sinner, but a sinner of the worst character. All the testimony goes to prove him, a man whose career had been but one course of iniquity; a man whose crimes, by a natural consequence, had brought him to a wretched, untimely end. The *name* applied to him, the word rendered "malefactor," is but another name for a highway robber, an assassin. Again, the *punishment* to which he was condemned, is another proof of his bad character. Crucifixion was the most cruel and the most disgraceful form of inflicting death known at this period, "a punishment reserved for slaves, and for the greatest of crimes." And we have the confession from his own lips, that he deserved it. We, he says, speaking to his companion, the other malefactor, *we* suffer *justly*, for we receive the due reward of our deeds. We deserve this extreme punishment, the utmost severity of the law. Again, the *spirit of the Jews* towards our Saviour gives us further proof. Christ, in his death, was "numbered with the transgressors." The special object, in crucifying him between these malefactors, was to blacken his character, to crown him with infamy, to hold him also up to view as a criminal. There is the best reason, therefore, for believing that these, the companions of his shame, were picked men, carefully selected for this very purpose—not doubtful, but notorious characters, known of all, as the most wicked and abandoned of men.

Such, then, is the force of the entire testimony as to the *character* of this man. Out of all that vast throng of wicked men, who stood around the Saviour, this man was perhaps the very last we should have fixed our choice upon,

as likely to become a friend of Christ, a subject of Divine mercy.

It is plainly evident, then, that up to this period this man was, to say the least, a sinner, and a hopeless sinner. But now, in the hour of approaching death, we see the beginning of a change, we hear him use the language of an humble penitent. He rebukes his companion who had joined with the mocking crowd, in railing at the Saviour. "Dost thou not *fear* God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" Here he shows that the fear of God—the beginning of wisdom—was working in his own heart. Next he confesses himself a sinner—acknowledges the justice of God in his sentence. "We indeed suffer justly, but this man hath done nothing amiss." He testifies to the innocence, the holiness of the Saviour. We are sinners, great transgressors, deserving *all* that the law can inflict, even this extreme punishment. But this man, Christ, is the holy one. "He hath done nothing amiss." What means the Spirit of God used to bring him to this right apprehension of himself, and this true conception of the spotless righteousness of a condemned, crucified Saviour—this we are not told, and on this point it is useless to speculate. It is enough to know that there was truth sufficient before his eyes; enough that we see, very plainly, the *dawning* of Divine light in his soul.

Next he prays, he looks to Christ in the spirit of an humble supplicant. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." This may seem to many quite natural, —an easy thing to do. What else, it may be said, could a man in his situation do, but cry for mercy? Many, doubtless, have comforted themselves with the thought that, in the hour of their extremity, they, too, will do the very same thing. But it is one thing to pray with the lips, and another to pray from the heart—one thing to utter *words* in a spirit of

doubting unbelief, and quite another to offer the prayer of true faith.

But let us look, for a moment, at the circumstances under which this prayer was offered. The person to whom this dying malefactor thus turned his eyes in prayer, was himself a dying man, hanging on a cross, undergoing the same disgraceful death, by the same life-destroying torture. Far more natural would it have seemed had he uttered the prayer of the *other* malefactor, "*If thou be Christ*—the true Messiah—save thyself and us."

Others had seen the Saviour in the times of his power, when multitudes followed him, amazed at his mighty works. This man saw him in his weakness, the helpless victim of the hatred of his enemies. Not only this, but it was the hour of his deepest abasement, when his person was disfigured with wounds and blood, his visage marred, his head bowed with shame and sorrow, his features convulsed with suffering, when surrounded by exulting foes, the mock and sport of an insulting rabble. He saw him suffering *alone*, deserted of every friend. If in all that vast throng he had friends, they were silent, they dared not avow themselves. His *disciples*, his nearest friends, who had witnessed all his wondrous acts, his mighty miracles, who had been eye witnesses of his Divine power and majesty—even these, his best friends, who knew him best, now, in the hour of trial, had forsaken him. Their confidence, if not lost, had been deeply shaken. Christ was now despised of men, and even they esteemed him not; they hid, as it were, their faces from him. Their faith had well nigh failed. The most they could say was, "we *did* trust it had been he who should have redeemed Israel." And, seemingly, it was to his enemies the hour of their greatest triumph. Christ now, *to all appearance*, was abandoned of God and man, a dying impostor, his power at an end, his hopes crushed, his pretensions proved to be worthless.

Such, then, were the circumstances, under which this man saw the Saviour. But in spite of all that looked so dark and forbidding, in spite of this weakness, shame, suffering, desertion, the bitter hate, and mocking contempt of a whole raging multitude—facing, stemming alone, this almost overwhelming torrent of scornful opposition, *this man* fearlessly, bravely, in humble, trusting, loving faith, lifts his dying voice in prayer to a dying Saviour. Of all this vast crowd, and in the teeth of all that opposed him, he only pays reverent, divine homage to a crucified Redeemer, addresses him as Lord and King, a King, who was yet to triumph gloriously over all his enemies; prays to him as his God, and Saviour—"*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,*" a prayer which is touching for its deep, reverent humility; asks but to be remembered, content, if allowed to hold *any*, even the *lowest* place, in the favour, the memory of this, *his* Lord and King.

Here, then, was wonderful, noble, heroic faith: a faith which shone *brightest* at the *darkest* hour. This man, whom the enemies of Christ had placed alongside of him, but for the *one express purpose* of putting him to open shame—this man, in the wonderful providence of God, is made to reflect on Christ the highest honour. Truly has it been said, that of all those whose faith is mentioned in the Scripture, none ever so honoured Christ. This man, so far as the strength, the brightness of his faith is concerned, well deserves that conspicuous place, that immortality of fame which the Bible has given him.

And we are left in no doubt as to the result. His prayer is heard and answered. The answer of the Saviour proves, too, that his prayer was the prayer of saving faith, of genuine repentance. It proved that he was a truly converted man, born again, a new man in Christ Jesus, a fit heir of eternal glory. None but such (we are told) can see the kingdom of heaven. Nothing entereth there that defileth

or worketh abomination. "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." This man, then, looked to Christ—Christ on the cross—and he was saved. Not only was he saved, but we have in his case, what we fail to find as to any other case recorded in Scripture. We have the highest attestation of his salvation, the word, the endorsement of our Saviour himself—"Verily, I say unto thee, &c."

We come next to enquire, What is the lesson taught us by this example? Why is the history of this dying, but saved malefactor set before us, so prominently, so conspicuously, hard by the very cross of our Saviour himself? Plainly, as I think, to teach us a most important lesson, as to the power and preciousness of that cross, the value of Christ's atoning death and sacrifice. It was to tell us plainly, by a marked, striking example, just what it is we must look to, must rely on, in every case; to tell us what is the great *essential* thing in the matter of our salvation, and again what is *not* essential. The very object and design of this prominent example, it would seem, was to show us what are God's true and only terms of salvation, in distinction from, in contrast with, those which man has devised; to strip the subject of its hardest burdens, to relieve us from those heavy encumbrances with which man's ingenuity and wisdom have loaded the plan of salvation. Let us look for a moment at the argument in proof.

The crucifixion of our Lord was the great crowning event of all Scripture. Here was laid the topmost stone. All that we read of in Scripture going before this, indicates a preparation on a vast scale for this grand event. And when it was ended, our Saviour bowed his head on the cross, and said, "It is finished." My work of redemption is completed. By this his sacrifice, as we are told, by this one offering of himself on the cross, he obtained for us eternal redemption.

Now, before our Saviour came into the world, men were saved through faith in a Messiah, a Saviour yet to come. After his coming, but while Christ was yet on earth, the believer looked to Christ as his Saviour, but still with no distinct conception of the actual, very way in which men were to be saved. But after Christ was lifted up on the cross, then they had no longer the shadow but the reality, the thing itself. Then was publicly proclaimed to the whole world, the very object we must look to for salvation, a Saviour crucified, a Saviour dying on the cross for our sins, suffering in our place. The thief on the cross, then, was the first who looked to Christ on the cross, and obtained salvation. His is the foremost, pioneer case, and the fact is attested in the most signal manner. One of two things then *must* be true. Either this man's case is a type case, a pattern, for all that vast multitude—the millions of the saved who come after him—in other words, just as this man was saved, so are we to be saved; or the contrary is true and this man's case is an exception. It teaches us nothing, certainly, as to the way in which God saves man. But is it reasonable to suppose that God would open the exhibition of the whole plan of salvation by an exception—that its very first application, the very first example of a man saved by the actual cross of Christ, would be a departure from all that came after it—that the Bible would thus throw confusion and doubt over all our views on this subject? Does it strike us as reasonable, or even conceivable, that in the establishment of an entirely new order of things, the introduction of a dispensation of salvation which is to last down to the end of time, in a matter too, where, clearly, it is of the utmost importance that we should have right views, the first step taken should be one taken in a wrong direction; that the first example, and that, too, so prominent an example, should differ from all that come after it; that from the very beginning, God designed thus

to mislead and confuse our views in this great matter of our salvation? Were a man of any pretensions to wisdom to pursue such a course, under similar circumstances, would it not excite our astonishment? would we not say he was pursuing an unwise course? Can we then impute such folly to God, in the face of that plain declaration, that God is not the author of confusion, and that for all there is but one plan of salvation? No other assumption then is possible, than that this case is brought out in such bold and striking relief, right under the shadow of the cross, to teach us, expressly and emphatically, what is the very thing that saves us.

What, then, are the facts in the case? How was this man saved? I remark, first, that very plainly he lacked three things, which are often and strenuously insisted upon as essential to salvation. Some, for example, insist that there is no salvation outside of the Church—their own Church, the only true Church. This man, our Saviour himself tells us, was saved. And yet he had no connection with any visible Church, true or otherwise.

Some again insist that there can be no salvation without baptism, and this a baptism after their own prescribed form. But whatever be the true form of baptism by water—a question so much discussed, and which it is found so hard to settle—one thing is certain, that the outward rite of baptism was never administered to this man in any form. And yet he was saved.

Thirdly, some insist that it is by our own righteousness that we must get to Heaven. Others again, that Christ's death and sacrifice saves us in part, and our own good deeds go to make up what is wanting. Christ does his part, and we our part. This man was saved, and yet he had no righteousness of his own to present before God—not a single act of obedience, no one good deed whatever, not even the shadow of one. Up to the time of his crucifixion, he

had been, all his life, a wicked, ungodly man; his career, but one dark catalogue of crimes. In all the past, then, he had nothing to show, nothing to offer. And in all the future, nothing! What could he promise for the future, nailed, as he was, fast to the cross, and on the very verge of death? What, then, did save him? Wicked, unworthy as he was, he looked to Christ for righteousness. Helpless as he was, able to do nothing for himself, he looked to a dying Saviour for help, put himself—all the interests of his soul for eternity—into the hands of Christ, his Lord and King; trusted with simple, childlike faith in him alone for salvation. And he was saved.

If, indeed, he had no membership with any visible Church on earth, he was, by faith, a member of Christ's Church, of the general assembly and Church of the first born—that universal Church, of which Christ is Head, Lord, and King.

If, indeed, he lacked the outward form of baptism, he had what is of far more value, that of which this rite is but the sign. He had the baptism of the Holy Spirit—that baptism by which he, in common with all true believers, was baptized into one body, the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If, too, he had no righteousness of his own to offer before God, he had, by faith, what was worth more than all the righteousness of the whole world besides. He had the infinite righteousness of Christ his Saviour. And had he lived, he too would have proved this, his faith, to be a true, living, Divine faith by his works, by a life of holy obedience to God's commands.

Let me not, however, be misunderstood on this point. Far be it from me to undervalue or decry any of these things. Men ought to profess openly their faith in Christ, to unite with his visible Church. They ought to be baptized; they ought to be careful to maintain good works. Yet these are

not salvation. Good and right as they are in their proper place, they are not the things that save us. By this leading example—this the foremost instance of a man saved by the cross—God has taught us a better way. We are relieved from these vexed questions, these heavy, embarrassing burdens, so far as the matter of our salvation is concerned. Our Saviour himself has told us expressly, that we can be saved without them.

And that we have taken the right view of this example —that it is set here so prominently for our special comfort and instruction, all scripture confirms. The gospel—God's message of salvation through Christ—is named, by way of eminence, "the gospel of the grace of God." And salvation by grace—free, without merit of any sort on our part—by grace, favour shown to those who had no claim to it—"is every where made the crowning feature of the gospel of Christ. And this man's case is the crowning example—the strongest exemplification of salvation by grace, recorded in all scripture. We read in the 55th chapter of Isaiah, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." This man thirsted, and he drank of the fountain of living waters. He had no money; and he bought, without price, the very blessing he needed. We read, in the Epistle to the Romans, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." These words apply with singular exactness to the case before us. We read again, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." Here, again, we have a statement fitting precisely to the case before us. Again the apostle says; "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." This man

believed in Christ, and he was saved. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." What else had this poor sinner to glory in? what else indeed could he glory in?—for by that cross he was himself introduced to immortal, never ending glory. "The Lord," it is said, "giveth grace and glory." Grace stands at the beginning, and glory at the end of Christian life. Grace is the bud, and glory the fruit. But here, grace had hardly budded before it ripened into glory.

Plainly, as I believe, God has placed this example so conspicuously before us, to teach us what is the very essence and spirit of the gospel. Here do we find a warrant, and the strongest warrant for proclaiming salvation through Christ to every one, to the very chief of sinners. "Come unto me," is the invitation here urged, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Now then are we ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. xxii. 17. "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Isa. i. 18. Much then as your past life may condemn you; nay, if like this man's, it were but one dark, blotted, even bloody page, still Christ says, Come. Still is this man a witness and a pledge for the truth of our Saviour's words, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

Such, then, is the lesson of encouragement I would have you take home to your own heart, if, indeed, you have not yet found Christ to be your Saviour. Will Christ, let me ask you, be less gracious to you than he was to this man? If the prayer of faith availed to save him, why shall it not avail to save you also? Did Christ graciously answer the

prayer of this sinner, but to mock your faith, to cheat your hopes! Has God planted this light on the very topmost heights of revelation, but as a false light to lure you on to a deeper destruction? Can you offer this insult to a Saviour's dying love? What then hinders you from enjoying at this very moment, the same assurances of salvation from a Saviour's lips? What, save a distrusting and unyielding heart?

And here, too, is the only safe, reliable ground of hope, even for those who have trusted in Christ. Of what avail are our Church connections, our forms and sacrifices, even our best deeds of righteousness, in the sight of "Him with whom we have to do," a God of infinite holiness? What more can we say, when we know ourselves, than the prayer of this man—"Lord, remember me." This, the sacrifice of an humble, contrite spirit, is the offering God hath said "I will not despise." "Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah lvii. 15.

Again, we learn from this subject the ground of true Christian charity. "Grace," says the apostle, "be with all them who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." And again, "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.

In every form of Christianity, however corrupt, we have reason to hope there are some who are entitled to this grace, some who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, some who have the same faith in Christ, the same elementary principle of Divine life, which this dying man had.

All such whatever name they bear, if they have this faith but as a grain of mustard seed, or as a grain of wheat in a bushel of chaff, though now they know us not, even though they may cast out our name as evil, still, so far as they

bear about them these marks of the Lord Jesus, are we bound to recognize as brethren.

Ignorance or bigotry may now throw us wide apart. But if Christ's we are brethren. And the time is coming when we shall see eye to eye, when we shall be joined heart to heart; when this faith shall grow and spread as a mighty overflowing river, and all minor differences shall be swallowed up in the one grand, all pervading principle of love for Christ, our common Saviour.

Lastly, I have but a word to say to those who may take encouragement, from this very example, to put off the day of repentance. The Bible tells us there are those who will thus abuse the grace of God. But any time beyond the present, may be to you a dying hour. A most awful uncertainty hangs over the future; you know not what a day may bring forth. Who can tell when he shall die, or where, or how he shall die? Who, that is at all alive to his danger, would venture the momentous concerns of eternity, upon the slender chances of a dying hour? Still, if at the last hour, you can offer the prayer of this dying man with the same faith, that he exhibited, then, like him, may you too be saved.

I say, if you can! But let me add, If you think that you can, you know not yourself, you know not what faith is. Faith is not a matter of the lips merely—a form of words only; but it is a matter of the heart, the action, the expression, of a confiding, loving heart, an exercise of the highest, noblest emotions of the soul. Such, plainly, was the faith that prompted the prayer of this man—"Lord, remember me." Though at the last hour, yet, as all the facts show, at the first view of the Saviour's dying love, his heart melted, and love kindled—responsive, confiding love. Is his case then an example for you, if thus far, with hard, relentless heart, you have only trifled with that love, and are still presuming to trifle, down to the latest

moment? In view of all the past, with what face could you then, in a dying hour, offer this prayer? Must not very shame seal your lips? Could you ask so much of an insulted earthly friend, one whose love you had ever slighted? But could you thus pray to the heart searching One—to an insulted Saviour—that Friend whose very blood and tears you had trampled upon? If indeed, you could pray at all, what confidence could you have in the faith of your own prayer, when, as you looked forward, the terrors of death and eternity were pressing hard upon your shuddering soul, and as you looked back, your guilty, miserable trifling? When such thoughts as these crowded upon you, what hope could you have of being able to offer the prayer of trusting, loving faith? What must your prayer be, but that of the terror stricken coward? Not the prayer of faith, but of abject, selfish, craven fear.

Two men were crucified with the Saviour. Both had the same golden opportunity, such as rarely falls to the lot of a dying man. Both died right in the view of a crucified Redeemer. Both prayed, the one in true faith, the other in a spirit of mocking unbelief. What hope have you, that you could get beyond the unbeliever's prayer, "If thou be Christ?" If thou canst, save me!

Here then, in this stupendous scene of Calvary, not only is the Saviour held up prominently to view, but the sinner also. In these two sinners hanging one on either side of our Lord, we have a representation of the whole race of man, those two great classes which divide and include all sinners, the ransomed, and the lost. And we are told what makes the wide difference between them. The one is brought out as conspicuously to view as the other. If the one malefactor be an example for every sinner, pointing plainly the way to eternal life, the other is also an example and a warning, pointing as plainly the way to eternal death. The one then is a type to us, of all sinners

saved: the other, of the lost. The great, the radical question is, "What think ye of Christ?" Is he, or is he not, your Lord and King? Is he, indeed, your Almighty Friend, to you a precious Saviour? This question it was which decided the destiny of these two sinners. From Calvary, from the cross, the one ascended with the Saviour up to glory, the other sank down to eternal despair.

Just as I am—without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bid'st me come to thee,
I come, O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not,
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
I come, O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about,
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
With fears within, and foes without,
I come, O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am—poor, wretched, blind:
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in thee to find,
I come, O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because thy promise I believe—
I come, O Lamb of God, I come.

No. 232.

THE POWER AND CLAIMS

OF A

CALVINISTIC LITERATURE:

A SERMON

ON BEHALF OF THE

Assembly's Board of Publication.

BY THE

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AND PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

DISCOURSE.

SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH, THY WORD IS TRUTH.
JOHN xvii. 17.

TRUTH is to the soul what light is to the eye, or what air is to the lungs, at once its aliment and its element, that in which and by which it must live. Hence, when there is life in the soul, there must be truth to support that life. The first condition of spiritual existence of course is life itself, which Christ imparts by the life-giving Spirit in the new birth. The second condition is truth, by which that life is supported. The life is distinct from its aliment, in the soul as well as in the body, but in both cases the character and continuance of the life depend greatly on the supply of the aliment. The amount and purity of the truth that is furnished to the soul will determine the character of the spiritual life.

These are the principles announced in this text. Sanctification is the vigorous life of the soul. This is asserted to be by the truth; not by every kind of truth, but by Divine truth, that system called God's truth; not by traditionalistic or rationalistic deliverances about that truth, but by the inspired word of God.

In the application of these general principles, we soon encounter a difficulty. Men cannot agree as to what constitutes this system of truth. They may

agree about some great central truths, but in regard to those that radiate from this centre, they differ. How then shall we proceed in this case? Two courses are open to us. The first is to confine ourselves exclusively to these central truths, and not attempt the general inculcation of the others. The simple objection to this is that God has not done it, and we cannot safely depart from his example. The second course is to give that truth, if possible, just as God has given it, not in segments, but as a whole, with its blazing centre, the cross of Christ, and its ample circumference, the doctrines that radiate from that centre, "the truth as it is in Jesus."

Our Church has adopted this course, and among other agencies for carrying it into effect, has instituted the Board of Publication. It is in the propriety of this decision that we find the complete vindication of the Board, and its claim to the support of the Church. It is in the adoption of this course that it differs from the great general and compromise agencies of our country, which have adopted the first course, and its complete vindication must rest at last on the propriety of the course itself.

In former pleas for this Board the general power of truth in the household has been presented, and then, the more specific power of a Christian literature. To complete the argument for its operations only another step is needful, and that is to show the power and consequent claims of that system of truth, and that type of Christian literature, which this Board was established to diffuse. If this can be successfully maintained, its claims to a vigorous support of the Church will be fully established.

It is well known that this Board was created to diffuse, through the press, that system of doctrine drawn from the word of God, which is embodied in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and which is commonly, but not properly, called the Calvinistic system. We object to this name, because these views did not originate with Calvin, and because Calvin did not define them accurately in every particular, and because no human name should be thus attached to Divine truth. But as the term has been widely adopted, and we have no single epithet equally significant, we may use it properly with this general disclaimer. Our position, then, is that inasmuch as we believe what is called the Calvinistic system to be that great summary of truth that God has revealed in his word, it is by preaching that system in its due proportions from the pulpit, and proclaiming it from the press, that we shall most perfectly embody the prayer of our Lord in the text, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth."

The work then assigned to this Board is much higher than that secular and commercial notion of it that is too prevalent. It is not only the great work of the Church, preaching the gospel by the press, as in her ministry she preaches the gospel by the pulpit; but it is also the work of preserving and extending a Calvinistic literature. The literature of any people is at once an exponent and an element of its life, containing alike the fruits of the past, and the seeds of the future. If he spake a truth who said, "Let me make the songs of a nation, I care not who makes their laws," how tremendous is the power that is

exerted by the entire literature of a people! The Homeric literature of Greece, the Augustan of Rome, that of Elizabeth, or the Restoration in England, the French literature of the age of Voltaire, and many others, familiar to every scholar, were both effects and causes of the most potent character. So it must ever be as long as action is the result of thought, and thought can be embodied and sent forth in written words. Hence, if a Calvinistic people have a real life, it will in the end bud, blossom, and mature into a Calvinistic literature, and that literature will be at once the monument of its power in the past, and the measure of its power in the future. It is this great work that is given to this Board, a work of vast moment, if there be a genuine and vital power in this literature.

We propose, then, in advocating the cause of this Board, to present to your consideration, *The Power and Claims of a Calvinistic Literature.* This we propose to do by looking, *first*, at its *Principles;* and *secondly*, at its *History.*

I. *The Principles embodied in a Calvinistic Literature.*

They may be reduced to two, the views held of the sovereignty of God, and the sinfulness of man. It teaches that God is a great Sovereign, and that man is a great sinner.

As to the Sovereignty of God, it holds that Jehovah reigns supreme, in fact as well as in right; that his creation is not a failure or a defeat, but a development of his eternal purpose; and that what he now performs or permits, (which includes all things,) he

always determined to perform and permit; in other words, that "he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

As to the sinfulness of man, it holds that "the fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery:" that this sinfulness "consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it;" and that its misery consists in the fact, "that all mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever." It further holds, that "God, having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer," who being the eternal Son of God, became man, and as Prophet, Priest, and King, purchased a redemption which is effectually applied to us only by the Holy Spirit. In a word, it teaches that man is so utterly guilty and helpless that his salvation must be wholly of God, not because of any foreseen goodness in him, but of his mercy; that in its beginning, continuance, and end, it is wholly of grace, for that of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory evermore.

Such are its principles. Now, as character is the result of principles, they must tend to generate a particular type of character. What is that type? Is it a desirable one?

In examining the action of principles on character, there are two aspects in which we must consider them; their action on man individually, and their action on him collectively.

1. What is the effect of these principles on man individually?

Their first effect is to alarm and humble; their next is to exalt and strengthen. By their teachings of human guilt and helplessness, they drag down all pride and carnal security, and prostrate man at the foot of the cross, a suppliant for mercy—a mercy that is sovereign, and therefore to be secured only in God's own time and way. They warn him thus of the peril of tampering with these offers, lest the appointed day of grace may end, and leave the soul to its doom. It is this stern denial of the vaunted powers of human nature, that has always made these doctrines so hateful to a Pelagian, Socinian, and Infidel philosophy. But it is this very picture of that nature, so dark, so fearful, so hopeless in itself, that tends most powerfully to alarm it, and cause it to cry for mercy; and to humble it, and thus prepare it for that mercy.

But when the soul has found peace in believing, these doctrines exalt to a grateful love, just in the proportion that they before humbled and alarmed. They love much, who have much forgiven. The deeper the horrible pit, and the viler the miry clay, the more exulting the notes of the new song, when the feet are felt to be placed on the Eternal Rock.

It is said that these doctrines are discouraging and depressing. But is this so? There are two great departments of our outer life—doing and suffering the

will of God. If this alleged tendency exists, it will be found either in the department of action or suffering. What is their legitimate influence here?

(1.) *Action.* At first sight, it may seem probable that the theory of human ability will generate a greater activity than that of inability. This would be true, if, in denying inherent ability to man, we exhibited no offer of any power to take its place. But when we take away the feeble and finite power of man, only to make room for the infinite power of God, and call on man to work himself, because God is working in him; when we show him that this emptying himself of all strength, is the condition of being filled with the fulness of God; that God's strength is made perfect in man's weakness—we then increase the motives to activity drawn from power that may be used, just as much as the strength of man is exceeded by the almightiness of God.

Nor is the case altered by the fact that this power is in promise, and not in possession; for it is just in this way that the highest activity ever developed in human life is called forth. Men are confronted with tasks that are above all apparent power; but as they gird themselves for these tasks with a courageous faith, they find a new and strange power as they go forward. All true heroism is developed precisely in this way. A Leonidas, a Luther, a Washington, attempt what seems a hopeless impossibility, but attempt it in a faith that will not falter, and that looks for a power to come in the time of need; and going right forward in that faith, the power does come, like a glorious baptism from above, whose cloven tongues of fire impart a might that enables

them to do what before was impossible. To limit the motives to active exertion thus to the amount of power in conscious possession, would be to dwarf all human heroism, and stunt instead of strengthening human energy. If this be true in all other departments of activity, it cannot be untrue in that of religion.

Nor will it answer to say that the discouraging element is in the other great fact, that human action is controlled by a Divine decree, and that it arises from the certainty that this fact involves. Fatalism, the mere caricature of this doctrine, which involves this element of certainty, has infused the mightiest energy into human activity. Some of the strongest spirits of our race, in their secret hearts have been fatalists, and have owed much of their terrible energy to this fact. Mohammed evoked from the sands of the desert those fierce cohorts that swept the earth like a tornado of fire, because they felt they were but working out the decree of Allah, that they were to conquer the world to the true faith. Attila was inspired with a barbaric energy that knew neither barriers nor bounds, because he believed he was "the scourge of God!" Even Napoleon was secretly upheld by his conviction that he was "the man of destiny," and hence attempted and achieved what to others seemed impossibilities. Thus it has often been with men of the most superhuman energy. Their energy has been superhuman, because they believed themselves but the instruments of a superhuman power.

Now if the grim caricature of this doctrine has breathed such energy, the doctrine itself must inspire

a yet loftier, for all that is energizing in it remains with added force, when for a blind fate we substitute a wise, decreeing God. Let me believe that nothing is certain, nothing decreed, and I have no assurance that the innumerable elements beyond my control may not baffle my strongest efforts, and defeat my best designs. But let me believe that I am in every commanded duty but working out an eternal purpose of Jehovah, that what he has required me to do, he will aid me in doing; that a mightier energy is breathing its potency through my feebleness, than mere human power; and I am girded with a strength that no other faith can give me, for when I am thus weak, then am I strong. Danger may meet me, but without God's permission shall not touch me. Death may threaten, but I am immortal till my work is done; and if it comes, it comes as a means of doing that which my life could not reach. My efforts may be feeble, and seemingly lost, but they are not really so, for they are the predestined means to the predestined end, if they are made in accordance with God's command. Hence I go forth to my work and warfare shielded by a panoply more invulnerable, and nerved by an energy more invincible, than any other faith could bestow. And believing that this all-embracing purpose descends to the very fall of a sparrow, there is no event too trivial and no person too obscure for its energizing power. The loftiest are never above it, and the lowliest are never beneath it, and the obscurest task in life is exalted by the thought, that it is a thread in the warp and woof of that mystic web of life which we are ever weaving in the ceaseless loom of time. Hence to say that these

doctrines cripple human activity, is to affirm what is as false in philosophy as it is in theology, and to ignore the teachings of all human history.

(2.) *Suffering.* It is equally erroneous to say that they are depressing in the sorrows of life. The very contrary is true. Did we believe that the world was left to the caprice of human wills and drifting chances; that no great end was evolving, and no great hand working in its history; that a thing so mighty and fearful as sin has entered, in defiance of God's purpose, and is rioting in defiance of his power—we might then well be depressed. But if we believe that beneath all this wild tossing of human purposes and events, there lies, in mighty and controlling embrace, a Divine purpose that governs them all, we may then sit down in calm and joyful assurance that in the end it shall be well.

Indeed, nothing but this can give real comfort to a mourner. Go to one whose heart is crushed beneath some great sorrow, and tell him that this rending stroke is a mere casualty, the dark smiting of an aimless chance, and you but mock his misery, and make it the more intolerable. The thought that all this agony is without aim or meaning; that the same blind chance which has swept off one object of love, may, in its pitiless eddying, snatch away the rest; and that no foreordered purpose of love is working out in his sorrow, will fill his cup of misery to the brim. But tell him that this stroke is not aimless or undesigned, but foreordained in fatherly kindness; not a thing of lawless chance, but a part of his earthly discipline, decreed in the distant past, and connected with the distant future; and although the sorrow may

still remain, there comes to it a sweet solace. He feels that although the reason for it is beyond his ken, there is a reason; and he is able to lift up his eye in trust, though it be in tears, and say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Indeed, the heart in its sorrow instinctively clings to this doctrine; for it always says, not, "It is chance, it is ill-fortune," but, "It is the Lord; let him do as seemeth him good." Deny this doctrine, and you dry up one of the sweetest fountains that has ever been unsealed to the sorrowing in the vale of tears.

Hence we may affirm, that the influence of these doctrines on the individual man is precisely what we desire; for they awaken the soul and lead it to Jesus, and then breathe into it a Divine strength to do and suffer the Divine will.

2. We return to the influence of these doctrines on *man collectively*, or on *communities*.

The society that is pervaded with these principles must be a progressive community. Believing, as it does, that to it in part is assigned the execution of a given portion of that great Divine plan which is developing in the history of the world, and which is of necessity progressive in its character, such a society must be progressive, or deny its faith. The work before it may be as vast and discouraging as the planting of a Christian church in the luxurious city of Corinth was to the musing Paul. But the stimulus to effort drawn from the Divine purpose is the same as it was to the great apostle. "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with

thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city." The fact that God has a people to be called, and a purpose to be fulfilled by the agency of his Church, is an unceasing stimulus to progressive action.

This progressive action develops certain organic facts in the social life. It naturally associates itself with the Presbyterian form of church government. Individuals may hold these doctrines under any form of church government; but when they are held by masses, they naturally attach themselves to this form, partly because of its scriptural fidelity and historic relations, partly because it has so little to gratify human pride and ambition, and partly because it combines that blended flexibility and strength which give the fullest scope to doctrines which require the union of a sense of human weakness with a reliance on Divine strength, in every activity of the Christian life.

A community thus organized must be marked by several characteristics arising from these elements.

(1.) *Intelligence.* These doctrines are such that they cannot long be held by an ignorant community. Either the mind will lose its grasp of the doctrines, or the doctrines will quicken the mind to greater intelligence. They stimulate the thinking powers, by the demands they make of them, and thus excite a thirst for increased knowledge. Hence there is no finer mental discipline for a child, than the study of the Shorter Catechism. The amazing accuracy of its definitions trains the mind to the first and most important attainment in all true mental culture, the correct use of terms; whilst the marvellous symmetry

of its logical structure develops the reasoning faculty, and thus makes it the very best instrument to train the young intellect to think, and so lays the foundation for an enlarged intelligence. And whilst I would not disparage any effort to popularize science, and elevate the standard of education, yet, if I am forced to an exclusive choice between two systems, I will unspeakably prefer that mental training, and that balanced character which a child shall receive from the Shorter Catechism at a pious mother's knee, to all the stuffing that can be given by all the Peter Parley books, and science-made-easy inventions that have ever been tried to make infant-school astronomers, and philosophers in bibs and tuckers.

The same thing is true of the Presbyterian Form of Church Government. Being a republic, it cannot, any more than a civil republic, be worked by an ignorant community. As long as it is used by intelligence, its fine and powerful system works in harmonious beauty. But with stupid ignorance to wield it, the jar and friction would soon be such as to bring it to a dead lock, or tear it to pieces. Hence it educates by necessity as an instinctive law of self-preservation; and wherever it plants the church, it erects in their places beside it, the school, the academy, and the college. "Calvin," says Bancroft, "was the father of popular education, the inventor of the system of free-schools. And we may add that no community has ever embraced the system called by his name, and yet remained in ignorance, for the system cannot live in ignorance. It must excite a people that embraces it to intelligence.

(2.) *Love of Liberty.* The republican character

of Presbytery, involving as it does ministerial parity, popular election, and the spiritual independence of the Church, generates inevitably a love of liberty. Denying all monarchy and aristocracy in the Church, it readily challenges them in the State; and asserting the rights of the people in sacred things, it teaches them to look for them in civil things. Involving then a constant exercise of popular rights in its various acts of government, it becomes a training institute among a people for civil liberty, and awakes a love for it that can never afterwards be wholly extinguished. In this respect it stands in marked contrast with Prelacy and Popery, that tend to generate submission to rulers, and reverence for prerogative and official power.

(3.) *Reverence for Law.* This important feature distinguishes Presbytery on the other hand from the fourth form of Church polity—Independency. That being a pure democracy cultivates a love of liberty as intense as Presbytery, but not as well regulated. It lacks the great ideas of law and organized authority that reside in Presbytery. Holding, as it does, that the will of the majority in each congregation is the supreme authority, from which there lies no appeal to any higher court; and having no general constitution giving an organic existence to the whole confederation of churches, it becomes a government of majorities, rather than a government of law. It has nothing to create that grand conception of law and organized authority, which presides over the swaying passions of the multitude, enthroning the embodied wisdom of many generations in high and calm supremacy over the yet unembodied wisdom of but one generation,

and by eliminating in each successive court of review, the causes of error below, correcting the fitful, and often false conclusions of an accidental majority. It is needful in every enduring free government that there should exist checks, and balances, and organic institutions, which shall embody these great ideas, or the government will soon burst in pieces by its own action. A pure democracy from which all external pressure is removed, must eventually disintegrate for lack of these great cohesive and organic principles, which are wanting in the system of Independency.

Presbytery, however, tends to generate these very ideas of law and organized authority. The people act not immediately, but through their representatives, and according to a system of written law and general government which binds all into one organic whole. Each governmental act is brought within the scope of that system of courts which rise in their fine and symmetrical arrangement of appellate tribunals from the manifold base of the congregational session to the culminating apex of the General Assembly, each acting under a written law which stretches uniformly over the whole. Thus it embodies in the most perfect manner these ideas of law and government, and trains the community to a reverence for them, as distinct from a reverence for rulers, or for majorities, regarded in their personal aspects. Hence, whilst Presbyterian communities have always loved liberty, they have also revered law and upheld order, and resisted alike the tyranny of the monarch and the tyranny of the mob. They have ever stood in the breach, like a wall of adamant,

against which have dashed in vain alike the proud surges of kingly despotism, and the wilder waves of popular fury that would sweep away the barriers of law and order in their terrible rush.

Now it is precisely these ideas that our country needs to feel more deeply at this time. It needs to feel that there is something sacred in law, as the cumulated experience of many generations, a thing hoary with years and with wisdom, restraining the highest and protecting the lowest, a thing hallowed with solemn compacts and awful oaths, and not to be rudely trampled down by the heated majorities of to-day, which in their turn may be trodden down by the heated majority of to-morrow. Our dangers as a nation lie in the vast expansion of our population, outgrowing the assimilating and cohesive force of our national life. This tends to substitute the power of numbers for the power of law, and confound the calm and deliberate will of the people, which ought to rule, with the present and often hasty decision of a majority, which may be only the heated echo of a demagogue. The only breakwater against these terrible surges is a reverence for law, and when once a crevasse is made here, then comes the deluge. Hence, it is precisely such an influence as this system of doctrine and order tends to produce, that our country needs to save it from the fate of all past republics.

Then as we look at the natural influence of the principles that underlie a Calvinistic literature, and find that in the individual they generate a type of piety that is both lowly and lofty—lowly in its humility, lofty in its faith and hope, and perseveranco

in action and suffering: and that in the community they create a progressive, intelligent, free, and law-abiding people, we infer, anterior to all examination of facts, that the circulation of such a literature must be a desirable thing, and that the harvest from such seed cannot be evil. But we are not left to mere *a priori* reasoning; we have the garnered harvests of this seed for many generations, and are able to bring these anterior inferences to the test of facts. Let us then look at

II. *The history of a Calvinistic Literature.*

We might begin this investigation with what we think the earliest specimens of Calvinistic literature extant in the Christian Church—the Epistles of Paul and Peter, and the Gospel of John. But as this is disputed ground, we begin at a later date. In tracing this history, we cannot and need not separate the influence of books and men, for they are so intermingled, that they must be considered together. The literature has always existed with the men, and the men have always created or cultivated the literature. Hence we need not carefully separate them.

There is one negative fact of no small importance. It is, that this literature has never been found connected with fundamental error. No heretic has ever held these doctrines; whilst many have reviled them, and begun their course of error by renouncing them. The Pelagian, the Arian, the Socinian, the Deist, and the Atheist, all unite with the Arminian in denouncing these doctrines. Since that old and ominous union of Herod and Pilate, and Annas and Caiaphas, no other such remarkable alliance against any system of doctrine can be found.

Another important fact is, that the devotional literature of the Church has been generally vitalized with these doctrines. Whatever a Christian may be when he argues and speculates, he will always be a Calvinist when he prays, and generally when he sings or suffers. The more profound his piety, the deeper will be his sense and utterance of God's sovereign grace and man's helpless guilt. The great hymn-writers of the Reformation in Germany and France, the sweetest singers of modern times, Watts, Doddridge, Newton, Cowper, Kirke White, Toplady, Bonar, and others, have held and loved these doctrines.

A third fact is, that a very large proportion of the most important works in didactic and practical theology, the works that live and are now moulding human character, have been informed by these doctrines.

Were any intelligent scholar asked whose writings among the Fathers wielded the most potent and permanent influence for good, he would at once reply, "Those of Augustine." They arrested the Pelagian heresy, defined to the mind of the Church her own views of the grace of God, and like golden vessels, carried the sacred fire of apostolic piety for a thousand years to many a stray heart that shone as a light in those ages of darkness. Augustine was at once the Plato and the Aristotle of the mediæval Church; and to the influence of his writings we owe much that was most pure in the piety, and most vigorous in the life of those ages, and his writings were instinct with these doctrines.

The form that rises next to the eye along the writers of the past, is that of the saintly Anselm, the devout Christian, the acute dialectician, who antici-

pated the ontological argument for the being of God, to which some of our profoundest minds are now turning as the most satisfactory; of whom Gieseler says, "that he was the first of the schoolmen, and the founder of natural theology, but who laboured, nevertheless, to preserve the faith uncompromised by philosophy;" who made the first attempt at a system of theology, and whose celebrated treatise on the incarnation so presented the doctrines of original sin and atonement, that an able writer has said, "that his views and speculations on this whole subject have prevailed very generally quite down to the present time. Nor have Grotius and Edwards, and the most elaborate modern writers added much on the subject." He, it is well known, was a docile disciple of Augustine in his theology. And although the scholastic theology became, in later and feebler hands, a mere drivelling play of subtleties, yet as a whole, it was an important training institute, an intellectual gymnastic, that prepared the way for the theology of the Reformation.

Time would fail us to enumerate the names of the great writers who have mingled these doctrines with the life of the Church; such as the venerable Bede, the martyred Gotteschalk, the eloquent Bernard, who in his ruddy youth vanquished Abelard, the Goliath of dialectics, who was the oracle of his age, and of whom Calvin says, "that he so speaks, that truth herself seems to speak;" and of whom Sir James Stephen says, that his writings could only proceed from one "who never ceased to worship except to write, and never laid down his pen except to pray;" and Greathead, and Bradwardine, Wickliffe, Huss,

Jerome of Prague, Tyndale, John Wesselus called the forerunner of Luther, and the light of the world, and others, all of whom loved and taught these doctrines.

And it is a well known fact that all the most devoted witnesses for the truth, before the Reformation—the Paulicians, the Culdees, the Bohemian brethren, the Waldenses, and Albigenses—held these doctrines, whilst within the Church of Rome, the purest portions, such as the Augustinians, and the Port Royal Jansenists, who have almost redeemed the name of Popery from utter condemnation, have done the same; whilst the Jesuits, and those on whom the mark of Antichrist blazes with most baleful lustre, have opposed and hated these doctrines, with an instinctive hatred. It is a fact most significant and unparalleled, that all heretics, all infidels, and all tyrants have hated Calvinism.

We thus reach the remarkable fact, that the forerunners and causes of the Reformation, whether we look at individuals or masses, were nearly all moulded by these doctrines, and influenced by this literature. Luther himself was an Augustinian monk, a fact in which lay wrapped the history of the Reformation.

At the opening of the Reformation then, it is not wonderful that nearly all the Protestant leaders held these doctrines, and advocated them in their writings. And although the early divisions of Protestantism have since connected these doctrines mainly with that great name which they now bear, these divisions had then no reference to these doctrines, for they are found more or less distinctly in nearly all the Protestant Confessions. But we need not go beyond the

writings of the great Genevan to find ample support for our argument.

We will not attempt to trace the influence of the writings of John Calvin, for that would require a volume, and one to which new pages must be yearly added, for "he being dead, yet speaketh." We will select but two testimonies to their power, from amongst many others, because they come from sources whence nothing but the truth could have extracted them.

Sir James Stephen, who is by no means friendly to "the great ergoist," as he terms him, thus speaks of his first work, the *Institutes*. "The religious influence that attended it was incalculable. It was received by the whole body of the Protestants in France, as the standard around which they might all rally." "We may indeed reject the story that a thousand editions of it were sold in his own lifetime; but we cannot dispute that, during a century and a half, it exercised an unrivalled supremacy over a large part of Protestant Europe."

"For that dominion it was indebted, in part, to the novelty and comprehensiveness of the design it accomplished; to the vast compass of learning, scriptural, patristic, and historical, which it embraced; to the depth and the height of the morality which it inculcated; and to the calm but energetic keenness with which is exposed the errors of his adversaries. But the popularity and influence of this remarkable book is also, in part, to be ascribed to its literary merits. Calvin has been described as the Bossuet of his age. Of all the French authors whom France has as yet produced, he was the most philosophical when he

speculated, the most sublime when he adored, the most methodical and luminous in the development of truth, the most acute in the refutation of error, and the most obedient to that law or spirit of his nation which demands symmetry in the proportions, harmony in the details, and concert in the parts of every work of art, whether it be wrought by the pen, the pencil, or the chisel. In the ninth chapter of Bossuet's *Histoire des Variations* may indeed be found the best, as it is a very reluctant, eulogy on the literary excellence of his first rival and predecessor." *Lectures on the History of France*, pp. 410. 521.

Speaking of the ecclesiastical organization effected by the General Synod of France, which met May 25th, 1559, exactly three hundred years ago, whose confession was but an epitome of the *Institutes*, he says: "A great social revolution had thus been effected. Within the centre of the French monarchy, Calvin and his disciples had established a spiritual republic, and had solemnly recognized as the basis of it, four principles—each germinant of results of the highest importance to the political commonwealth. These principles were—first, that the will of the people was the one legitimate source of the power of their rulers; secondly, that power was most properly delegated by the people to their rulers, by means of elections, in which every adult man might exercise the right of suffrage; thirdly, that in ecclesiastical government, the clergy and laity were entitled to an equal and coördinate authority; and, fourthly, that between the Church and State, no alliance, or mutual dependence, or other definite relation, necessarily or properly existed." P. 415.

The other testimony is from the *Westminster Review*, which none will suspect of Calvinistic leanings, and from a writer who confesses "an implacable antipathy" and "a personal hate" of Calvin. This writer is compelled to state that Calvin "saved the Reformation," "sowed the seeds of liberty in Europe," and "evoked a moral energy which Christianity had not felt since the era of persecution." He says, "The peculiar ethical temper of Calvinism is precisely that of primitive Christianity—of the catacombs and the desert—and was created under the same stimulants."

"Had Calvin, like Plato, left only a paper sketch of a republic, in glowing language and magnificent imagery, how much more would he have been admired by the world! He did much more than describe a virtuous society—he created one. Calvin's ideal is, doubtless, vastly inferior to that of Plato; but it is under the disadvantage of having been worked in practice. With what surprising effect it worked, the whole history of Protestant Europe is witness. It was a rude attempt, indeed; but then it was the first which modern times had seen, to combine individual and equal freedom with strict self-imposed law; to found society on the common endeavour after moral perfection. The Christianity of the middle ages had preached the base and demoralizing surrender of the individual: the surrender of his understanding to the church; of his conscience to the priest; of his will to the prince. Protestantism, as an insurrection against this subjugation, laboured under the same weakness as all other revolutions. It threw off a yoke, and got rid of an exterior control, but it was destitute of any basis of interior life. True freedom can only be

founded on a strong sense of personality; the conscious possession of a moral force, from which the moral actions flow. Mere emancipation from the tutelage of a church or a government, will not convey this basis of self-reliance. The will is not free, merely because it is relieved from outward restraint.

"The policy of Calvin was a vigorous effort to supply that which the revolutionary movement wanted—a positive education of the individual soul. Crushed under the weight of a spiritual aristocracy on the one side, and ground down by the huge machine of administrative monarchy on the other, all personal freedom, all moral attributes, had nearly disappeared among the people on whom this superincumbent mass pressed. To raise up the enfeebled will, to stir the individual conscience, to incite the soul not only to reclaim its rights, but to feel its obligations; to substitute free obedience for passive submission—this was the lofty aim of the simple, not to say barbarous legislation of Calvin. The inquisitorial rigours of the Consistory encouraged instead of humbling independence. Government at Geneva was not police, but education; self-government mutually enforced by equals on each other. The power thus generated was too expansive to be confined to Geneva. It went forth into all countries. From every part of Protestant Europe eager hearts flocked hither to catch something of the inspiration. The Reformed communions, which doctrinal discussion was fast splitting up into ever-multiplying sects, began to feel in this moral sympathy a new centre of union. This, and this alone, entitled the Reformation to make head against the terrible repressive forces brought to bear by Spain—

the Inquisition and the Jesuits. Sparta against Persia was not such odds as Geneva against Spain. *Calvinism saved Europe.* The rugged and grotesque discipline of Calvin raised up, from St. Andrews to Geneva, that little band, not very polished, not very refined, but freemen!

> 'That which we are, we are;
> One equal temper of heroic hearts,
> Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.'

"Such is the admirable force upon the human conscience, of the simple virtues of sincerity and self-denial. Where they are exhibited in a distinct and recognizable form, they never fail to conquer, and to spread themselves. Henceforward Calvinism tended to take up into itself all the moral worth existing anywhere in Protestantism. As the Humanistic movement has been absorbed into the Protestant, so the first or Lutheran reform was gradually overborne by the Calvinistic, save where State interests interfered to prevent it. Such is the law of all great movements. The truly great excite a magical influence. Character is more powerful than intellect. The lesser stream empties itself into the greater. Lutheranism was incapable of propagating itself. Calvinism reappeared again and again, with no less vitality than at first. It animated the Cameronians of Cleland no less than the Independents of Cromwell, or the defenders of La Rochelle."—*Westminster Review*, No. cxxxviii., pp. 3, 7, 13. American edition.

We need not add to these testimonies others equally emphatic to show the power of Calvin's pen, for that pen has made wider and deeper tracings on the world's history, than the sceptre of Charlemagne, or the sword of Napoleon.

This is no random assertion, for did our limits permit, we could show from admitted historical facts that the influence of Calvinism which "saved Europe" in the middle of the sixteenth century has moulded, negatively or positively, the whole current of modern history.

Negatively it is connected directly with the French Revolution, and all its tremendous results. Calvinism cherished in France would have saved the French Revolution, as far as we can see, for there is not a single cause of that terrible convulsion that may not be traced to the blind and bloody policy of France toward the Hugonots. Had she cherished that Hugonot element, which in its banishment so wonderfully built up the commerce and manufactures of Holland and England, she would have had the wealth, the population, and the moral and religious influence that would have neutralized the causes of that fearful eruption. But for two hundred years she was butchering and banishing her best and bravest sons, until having destroyed her Lots, there came down upon her guilty cities the whirlwind of fire.*

* As some may question this position, a few facts in support of it may not be amiss, although a full development of the evidence would require a volume, rather than a note. France lacks two requisites to a free government, possessed by England and the United States, (1.) that substratum of ideas or principles which qualifies a people for self-government; and (2.) that class of men moulded by these ideas, which would support such a government. Both these would have been furnished by the Hugonots. That they possessed the ideas is already clear from what has been quoted before in reference to Calvin. That they possessed the kind of population that would have given expression to these ideas, and that this population was butchered and banished is equally clear. The massacres of D'Oppede in 1545, depopulated a whole province; that of St. Bartholomew, according to Perefixe, a courtier and a catholic, destroyed one hundred thousand, and the revocation of the edict of Nantes exiled most of the manufacturing and commercial industry of France. A few facts from a vast mass will illustrate this statement. The policy of Richelieu toward the Hugonots compelled them to create manufactories,

But that influence which was banished from France was welcomed elsewhere, and carried with it the seeds of modern history. It was received into Switzerland, and uniting with its kindred elements there, made Geneva, in the words of Bancroft, the fertile seed-plot of liberty.

It was welcomed into Holland, and evoked from its marshes that mighty Dutch Republic, which in its very cradle grappled with Spain, and drove back in disgrace the haughty usurper; and then girdling the world with its colonies, and covering the seas with its fleets, prepared the way for English and American liberty. And if Holland produced Arminius, she also gave birth to the Synod of Dort.*

which soon became noted throughout the world. One place in Normandy exported linens to the amount of 400,000 livres annually, another 800,000, and another, 4,500,000. All other kinds of trade were equally flourishing. Most of these establishments were broken up by the revocation. 70,000 workmen emigrated to England alone, and laid the foundation for her vast manufacturing interest. Macpherson estimates that France lost from England by this emigration an annual revenue of 90,000,000 francs, which, considering the change in the value of money, is equal to $40,000,000 now. The exiles built up the commerce of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and other cities in an equal ratio. Vauban in an official paper admits that France lost 100,000 men; 60,000,000 of money; her commerce and navy crippled by the transfer of 9,000 of her best sailors to the enemy's fleet; and 600 officers and 12,000 veteran soldiers to their armies. Sismondi estimates the exiles at 400,000. St. Simon says that it ruined French commerce and perceptibly depopulated one fourth of its territory. Nine of the generals thought worthy of an inscription on the statue of Frederick the Great in Berlin, were Hugonot exiles. Some of the first scholars and most illustrious soldiers of the age were Hugonots. Had all this rich material been left to France, who can doubt that the Revolution might have been avoided, or at least greatly modified? For additional facts, see the works of Weiss, Bungener, De Felice, and others.

* To these we might add Hungary, whose gallant struggle in 1848 awaked a sympathy that subsequent events have unreasonably cooled. In the petition of the Protestant clergy of Hungary, to Francis Joseph I., dated Pesth, May 5, 1851, their second request of the Emperor is, "that your Majesty would restore us our independence as a Church, and allow us to manage our ecclesiastical affairs in the Presbyterian form, which we regard as apostolical, and, therefore, as the only proper mode of Church Government. We lay on the freedom of our Church courts the same stress which John Knox laid on it, when he said: 'It is all one

On the gray hills of good old Scotland did this sturdy seed take a deep root, and watered by the tears and prayers of Knox and Henderson, and the blood of Hamilton and Argyle, and many a hunted Covenanter, the handful of corn on the top of the mountains now shakes like Lebanon. From its earliest struggle with Popery, to its last great contest for Christ's crown and covenant, the Calvinism of Scotland has always stood like her own Benlomond; a grand, unchanging witness for the majesty of God, transmuting the very storms that have raged around her unwrinkled brow, into fountains of gushing purity from her heart.

Nor has England failed to illustrate this influence. Three times in her history has she been stirred to the heart by a great revival; and each time by the power of these doctrines. In the great Reformation-revival which gave the Bible to the people, and lifting up the rude Saxon, whilst it softened down the haughty Norman, created the strong-hearted English people, all the great actors were Calvinists. In the brief and blessed reign of Edward VI., the influence of Calvin was paramount in England, as the Articles remain to testify, and even the Liturgy is said to have felt his hand, and lost some of its relics of Popery. Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, Rogers, and others of blessed memory, were all Calvinists. Then came the great

whether they take from us the freedom of the Church courts, or deprive us of the gospel.'" *History of the Protestant Church in Hungary*, with an Introduction, by D'Aubigné, p. 556; and *Brace's Hungary in* 1851. Pp. 208–210.

A writer in the *Westminster Review* of January 1859, after stating that the teachings of Calvin were introduced into Hungary in 1554, and eagerly embraced by all classes, adds—"So deeply are the people still attached to a creed which was once that of nearly all Hungary, that to this day the Confession of Geneva is popularly called 'the Hungarian faith.'"

Puritan revival, which was moulded essentially by the returned exiles of bloody Mary, who learned lessons in their refuge in Geneva, which they practised on a wider field in the hall of debate, and the field of battle. This revival swayed the English heart by the mighty power of God, as it had never been swayed before, fought the battle of civil liberty, expelled the Stuarts from the throne, and seated a Dutch Calvinist in their place. The Arminianism of England, under Laud, rallied around the Jameses and Charleses, whilst the men who trampled down the haughty Cavaliers like tinselled puppets, and made the name of England terrible by land and by sea, were Calvinists. Then came the great evangelical revival of the eighteenth century, which breathed so much of its present life into England. That was largely produced by the power of these doctrines. We do not forget the great work of the Wesleys, but even their power lay not in their denial of these doctrines, so much as in the truth they preached, which is included in this system. And a very large part of the great work was wrought by such men as Whitefield, Hervey, Walker, Toplady, Berridge, Adams, Grimshawe, Venn, and Romaine, who were Calvinists. And the Evangelical portion of the Anglican Church, which contains so much of its life and benevolent activity, is mainly Calvinistic.

When we come to the last and mightiest birth of the great Protestant movement—our own giant Republic—every page of its annals illustrates the words of Bancroft: "He that will not honour the memory, and respect the influence of Calvin, knows but little of the origin of American liberty." The men who laid its foundations—the stern Puritans of New Eng-

land, the sturdy Hollanders of New York, the strong-hearted Scotch-Irish of Pennsylvania and Virginia, the hardy Caledonians of North Carolina, and the chivalrous Hugonots of South Carolina, were Calvinists. The churches that declared earliest for the Revolution, most of whose sons are sleeping beneath the sods of the bloodiest fields of that mighty struggle, were Calvinistic. The colleges and schools, the benevolent and religious enterprises, and all departments of Christian activity, have since been largely indebted to the gifts and toils of Calvinists.

Thus, as we trace the flow of modern history, there is not a tide-wave in its current, not a struggle for human advancement, civil or religious, in which the influence of these doctrines has not been felt. And where the surge of battle has rolled fiercest and fastest, and the day of toil has hung hottest and heaviest, there have always been found among the hearts to dare, and the arms to do—hearts and arms that were nerved by the faith and love of these old and hallowed doctrines.

Indeed, where is the field of holy activity where these doctrines have not been felt? Where the realm of holy thought where this literature does not stand eminent, if not preëminent? Is it in the stately department of systematic theology? We are met by the massive tomes of Gerhard, Pictet, Mark, Turretine, Witsius, Van Mastricht, Ridgely, Hill, Dick, Dwight, and many others, who stand peerless among the mighty thinkers of the past. Is it in Scripture exposition? Calvin is to this day unsurpassed as an expositor; Vitringa, and the Holland divines; Beza, Luther, and many of the German expositors of that and later times,

were and are Calvinistic, at least in their interpretations; Poole, and the Puritan commentators, are still mines for modern students; the commentaries that now mould most widely the great heart of English Christendom, are those of Henry, Scott, and Doddridge; whilst among Scotch and American expositors, it is not invidious to say that the very first rank is confessedly held by Calvinists. Is it in didactic divinity? Who are more venerable than many of those grave and godly men who sat in the Westminster Assembly, that august senate of sages, whose roll held such majestic names as those of Selden, Hale, Lightfoot, Calamy, Caryl, Goodwin, Tuckney, Henderson, Rutherford, and others, whose memorial the Church will not soon permit to die?

And where are pages of profounder thought and warmer piety than those of the colossal Owen, the Platonic Howe, the saintly Sibbs, the fervid Flavel, the quaint Brooks, the massive Charnock, the glowing Hervey, the holy Romaine, the Erskines, Bostons, Jonathan Edwardses, and a host of more recent writers, whose books are on every shelf? Is it in practical piety? Nearly all the living works of this kind were written by Calvinists. Baxter's Call, Alleine's Alarm, Doddridge's Rise and Progress, Wilberforce's Practical View, Pike's Persuasives, the Dairyman's Daughter, James's Anxious Inquirer, Henry's Anxious Inquirer, the writings of Nelson, the Alexanders, Nevins, and others that are speaking in other tongues, and beneath other skies, the everlasting gospel, were all written by Calvinists. The books and tracts that the toiling colporteur has this day been carrying to the thousand lonely hovels, hidden away in mountain gorges and pathless forests, have mainly been written by Calvinists.

Is it in revival power? Livingstone, Edwards, Whitefield, Tennent, Haldane, Neff, Nettleton, Nelson, Gallaher, Baker, McCheyne, Bonar, and others, were Calvinists. Is it in pulpit eloquence? What names blaze with a lustre above the mighty preachers of the Reformation—the Claudes, Saurins, and Rabauts, of France; the great Puritan preachers of England; and such modern names as Irving, Chalmers, Thomson, Hall, Binning, Spencer, Guthrie, McLeod, Candlish, Spurgeon, Guinness, McNeile, Melvill and Caird; and in this country such sons of thunder, as Davies, Waddel, Mason, Griffin, Payson, Larned, and a host of others, living and dead, eloquent men, and mighty in the Scriptures? Is it in far-reaching philanthropy? Let the great benevolent agencies set on foot by Calvinists give reply. And if individual names are asked, that of John Howard will answer for a hemisphere, and those of Brainerd, Martyn, Carey, Moffat, Duff, and our own noble roll of martyrs sleeping beneath the palm-trees of Africa, the waves of the Chinese Sea, and the bloody sands of Cawnpore, will be held in perpetual remembrance. Is it in more graceful departments of literature? The Pilgrim's Progress was written by a Calvinist; Paradise Lost was written by one whose early mental training, and whose riper spiritual discipline, before the wanderings of age and blindness came upon him, were in these doctrines. Cowper, Beattie, Pollok, and the sweetest hymn-writers of the Church, wrote under their inspiration; whilst the finest material for much of Scottish song was created by that Calvinistic piety, so touchingly depicted in the "Cottar's Saturday Night."

A Western paper and an Eastern magazine have re-

cently proclaimed sneeringly to the world, that this literature is now effete, that this old tree is girdled and dead. But is this wealth of foliage and fruit a sign of death? True, its bark is rough, its stem is gnarled, and its boughs are twisted often into knotted shapes of ungraceful strength. But, remember it is not a willow-wand of yesterday. These boughs have wrestled with the storms of a thousand years; this stem has been wreathed by the red lightning and scarred by the thunderbolt; and all over its rough rind are the marks of the battle-axe and the bullet. This old oak has not the pliant grace and silky softness of a green-house literature, but it has a majesty above grace, and a grandeur beyond beauty. Its roots are strangely contorted, it is true, but some of them are rich with the blood of glorious battle-fields, some of them are clasped around the stakes of martyrs; some of them hidden in solitary cells and lonely libraries, where deep-thinkers have mused and prayed, as in some apocalyptic Patmos; and its great tap-root runs back, until it twines in living and loving embrace around the cross of Calvary. Its boughs are gnarled, we grant, but they hang clad with all that is richest and strongest in the civilization and Christianity of human history.

And shall we, in the face of such facts as these, concede for a moment that such doctrines are to be held in abeyance, or such literature restrained? Does not all that is best in history rebuke such folly as treason to the noblest names and deeds of the past? Shall we then concede that our Board of Publication, charged with the dissemination of this literature, must take a secondary place, as a mere supplementary agency,

subordinate to others in value and importance? No, never! We will rather seek to widen its orbit and quicken its speed, until its light shall go round the world. We will rather send forth each year a larger number of toiling colporteurs, who shall carry to lonely valleys, and rugged mountains, and sequestered hamlets, the mighty masters of thought, who, untouched by the weariness, sickness, and death, that come upon the living preacher, may tell them the wonderful works of God. We will allow it to send to them the high-hearted Calvin, to unfold by his masterly logic, the Institutes of the Christian religion: the dreaming tinker of Bedford jail, to tell them of the wicket-gate, the delectable mountains, the sunny land of Beulah, and the gleaming walls of the celestial city; the gentle Doddridge to trace the Rise and Progress of religion in the soul; the venerable Miller to expound to them our scriptural polity; the revered Alexander to unfold the rich depths of Religious Experience; the holy Matthews to illumine the Divine Purpose; the sage Green, to expound the Shorter Catechism; and living writers to proclaim to them the doctrines of grace in their fulness and beauty. And then when God writes up his people, it may be found that this and that man, in numbers like dew from the womb of the morning, were led to Jesus by some of these silent, unwearied itinerants, and that in sending forth these printed sheets, we have been giving to the messenger-winds of heaven, some leaves of the tree of life that are for the healing of the nations.

No. 233.

CONSOLATION

ON THE

DEATH OF INFANT CHILDREN.

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2 Sam. xii. 23. "I shall go to him." *First*, to him to the grave. *Secondly*, to him to heaven, to a state of blessedness. Godly parents have great reason to hope concerning their children who die in infancy, that it is well with them children in the other world; for *the promise is to us and to our seed*, which shall be performed to those that do not put a bar in their own door, as infants do not. This may comfort us when our children are removed from us by death; they are better provided for, both in work and wealth, than they could be in this world. We shall be with them shortly to part no more.—*Matthew Henry's Commentary.*

The child released from sufferings went before to a better world. Our prayers for our children are graciously answered, if some of them die in their tender infancy (for they are well taken care of), and the others live "beloved of the Lord."—*Scott's Commentary.*

Matthew xix. 14. "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." On this text Scott remarks, "Indeed the expression, 'for of such is the kingdom of heaven,' may also intimate that *the kingdom of heavenly glory* is greatly constituted of such as die in infancy. Infants

are as capable of regeneration, as grown persons; and there is ground to conclude, that all those who have not lived to commit actual transgressions, though they share in the effects of the first Adam's offence, will also share in the blessings of the second Adam's gracious covenant, without their personal faith and obedience, but not without the regenerating influence of the Spirit of Christ."

Romans v. 14. "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression."

On this text Scott says,—"There may indeed be a comfortable hope, that as infants die in Adam, without their own personal transgression; so they will be saved in Christ, without their own personal faith in him, as never living to be capable of it; yet that change must be wrought in them by the regenerating Spirit, which would have produced faith, had they lived longer."

"*Dear Sister,*—If our Lord hath taken away your child, your lease of him is expired. And if ye will take a loan of a child from the Lord, give him back again willingly, as his borrowed goods should return to him. Believe that he is not gone away, but sent before; and that the change of the country should make you think, that he is not lost to you, who is found to Christ; and that he is now before you; and that the dead in Christ shall be raised again. As he was lent awhile to time, so he is given now to eternity, which will take yourself. And the difference of your shipping, and his, to heaven and Christ's shore, *the land of life*, is only in some few years, which weareth every day shorter, and some short and soon reckoned summers will give you a meeting with him."—*Rutherford's Letter to Agnes Macmath, Oct.* 16, 1640.

"Heaven is greatly made up of little children, sweet buds that have never blown, or which death has plucked from a mother's bosom to lay on his own cold breast, just when

they were expanding, flower-like, from the sheath, and opening their engaging beauties in the budding time and spring of life. 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.' How sweet these words by the cradle of a dying infant! They fall like balm drops on our bleeding heart, when we watch the ebbing of that young life, as wave after wave breaks feebler, and the sinking breath gets lower and lower, till with a gentle sigh, and a passing quiver of the lip, our child now leaves its body, lying like an angel asleep, and ascends to the beatitudes of heaven and the bosom of God. Indeed it may be, that God does with his heavenly garden, as we do with our gardens. He may chiefly stock it from nurseries, and select for transplanting what is yet in its young and tender age—flowers before they have bloomed, and trees ere they begin to bear."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

John Newton says,—"I hope you are both well reconciled to the death of your child. Indeed I cannot be sorry for the death of *infants*. How many storms do they escape! Nor can I doubt, in my private judgment, that they are included in the election of grace. Perhaps those who die in infancy, are the exceeding great multitudes of all people, nations, and languages mentioned in Revelation vii. 9, in distinction from the visible body of professing believers, who were marked on their foreheads, and openly known to be the Lord's."

"Ye have lost a child—nay, she is not lost to you, who is found to Christ; she is not sent away, but only sent before; like unto a star, which, going out of our sight, doth not die and vanish, but shineth in another hemisphere; ye see her not, yet she doth shine in another country. If her glass was but a short hour, what she wanteth of time, that she hath gotten of eternity; and ye have to rejoice that ye have now some plenishing up in heaven."—*Rutherford's Letter to Lady Kenmure, January* 15, 1629.

"I have heard also, madam, that your child is removed;

but to have or want is best, as He pleaseth. Whether she be with you, or in God's keeping, think it all one; nay think it the better of the two by far, that she is with him.' —*Letter to the same.*

"The death of children," says Dr. Lawson, "puts a final period to all that we can do for them; but our grief on this occasion is effectually counterbalanced, by the consciousness that we have earnestly endeavoured to do what lay in our power while they were with us; especially when we have good reason to hope, that our prayers for them have not been rejected, and that Divine mercy led them safe through life and death to a world, from whence they would not for a thousand worlds return. I have lost, for the rest of my time in this world, some children whose faces I always beheld with pleasure; but I hope, young as they were, they were better fitted for leaving this world than I am. We are authorized by Scripture, without expecting a revelation from God respecting their state, to rejoice in the hope that they are sleeping in Jesus, and living with him, and shall be brought with him, in the great day of his appearance."

"I have had six children," said Mr. Elliott, "and I bless God for his free grace, they are all with Christ, or in Christ; and my mind is now at rest concerning them. My desire was that they should have served Christ on earth; but if God will choose to have them serve him in heaven, I have nothing to object to it. His will be done!"

"I was in your condition; I had but two children, and both are dead since I came hither. The supreme and absolute Former of all things giveth not an account of any of his matters. The good Husbandman may pluck his roses and gather in his lilies at midsummer, and, for aught I dare say, in the beginning of the first summer month; and he may transplant young trees out of the lower ground to the higher, where they may have more of the sun, and

more free air, at any season of the year. What is that to you, or me? The goods are his own. The Creator of time and winds did a merciful injury (if I dare borrow the word) to nature, in landing the passenger so early. They love the sea too well, who complain of a fair wind and a desirable tide, and a speedy coming ashore; especially a coming ashore, in that land, where all the inhabitants have everlasting joy upon their heads. He cannot be too early in heaven." — *Rutherford's Letter to Mrs. Taylor, London,* 1645.

It is a beautiful thought of Archbishop Leighton, in regard to the death of a little nephew, that departed children are but gone to bed a little sooner, as children are wont. "John," said he, "is but gone an hour or two sooner to bed, as children are used to do, and we are undressing to follow. And the more we put off the love of the present world, and all things superfluous beforehand, we shall have the less to do when we lie down."

Your child, though dead, is still, bereaved parents, yours. "God has given me three sons," writes the Rev. Oliver Heywood in his Meditations, "all living, only the youngest lives with God, in his immediate presence, having died in infancy under the covenant."

"Your bairns now at rest, I speak to you and to your wife, and cause her to read this. They are not lost to you, that are laid up in Christ's treasury in heaven. At the resurrection, ye shall meet with them; they are sent before, but not sent away. Let not bairns be your idols; for God will be jealous, and take away the idol, because he is greedy of your love wholly."—*Rutherford's Letter to John Gordon, of Cardoness.*

"Take no heavier lift of your children than your Lord alloweth. Give them room beside your heart, but not in the yolk of your heart where Christ should be; for then they are your idols, not your bairns. If your Lord should take

any of them home to his house, before the storm come on, take it well. The owner of the orchard may take down two or three apples off his own trees, before midsummer, and ere they get the harvest sun; and it would not be seemly that his servant the gardener should chide him for it. Let our Lord pluck his own fruit at any season he pleaseth; they are not lost to you; they are laid up so well, as that they are coffered in heaven, where our Lord's best jewels lie."—*Rutherford's Letter to the Lady Gaitgirth, Sep.* 7, 1647.

"I sincerely sympathize with you," says Dr. Erskine to a friend who had lost an only son, "in your heavy trial. I have drunk deep of the same cup; *of nine sons*, only one survives. From what I repeatedly felt, I can form an idea what you must feel. I cannot, I dare not say, Weep not. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, and surely he allows you to weep. But oh, let hope and joy mitigate your heaviness. I know not how this shall work for your good, but it is enough that God knows. He that said, 'All things work together for good to them that love God,' excepts not from this promise the sorest trial. You devoted your son to God; you cannot doubt that he accepted the surrender. If he has been hid in the chamber of the grave from the evil of sin and the evil of suffering, let not your eye be evil when God is good. What you chiefly wished for him, and prayed on his behalf, was spiritual and heavenly blessings. If the greatest thing you wished for is accomplished, at the season and in the manner that infinite Wisdom saw best, refuse not to be comforted. You know not what work and what joy have been waiting for him in that other world."

"Should any parent," says Dr. Chalmers, "feel softened by the touching remembrance of a light that twinkled a few short months under his roof, and at the end of its little period expired, we cannot think that we venture too far

when we say, that he has only to persevere in the faith and in the following of the gospel, and that very light will again shine upon him in heaven. The blossom which withered here upon its stalk, has been transplanted there to a place of endurance; and it will there gladden that eye which now weeps out the agony of an affection that has been sorely wounded; and in the name of Him, who if on earth would have wept along with them, do we bid all believers to sorrow not, even as others who have no hope, but to take comfort in the thought of that country where there is no sorrow and no separation."

Godly Submission.

"There is no way of quieting the mind, and of silencing the heart of a mother, but godly submission. The readiest way for peace and consolation to clay vessels is, that it is a stroke of the Potter and Former of all things; and since the holy Lord hath loosed the grip, when it was fastened sure upon your part, I know that your light, and I hope that your heart also, will yield. It is not safe to be at pulling and drawing with the omnipotent Lord. Let the pull go with him, for he is strong; and say, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' "—*Rutherford's Letter to Mrs. Craig, on the death of her son.*

Rev. i. 17, 18. "Fear not; I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; *and have the keys of hell and of death.*"

This consideration should repress, not only the anxieties which we feel in regard to the future, but also the regrets which we are too apt to cherish respecting the *bereavements* with which we have already been visited. It is not less instructive and consoling, when viewed, in reference to the death of relatives and friends, than when it is considered in respect to our own prospect of dissolution. For it teaches us, that the duration of each man's existence here is deter-

mined by the Redeemer; that it belongs to him to appoint a longer or shorter period to each, as he will; and in doing so, we have reason to be satisfied, that he determines according to the dictates of infallible wisdom, although the reasons of his procedure must necessarily be to us, for the present, inscrutable. We cannot tell why one is removed in infancy, another in boyhood, a third in the prime of manly vigour, and a fourth reserved to the period of old age; and, above all, why the most promising in talent and character, and the most useful in their several stations, are taken away, while others of inferior worth are often left behind; but suffice it for us, that this happens not by chance, neither is it the result of caprice or carelessness, but flows from that unerring wisdom, whose counsels are formed on a view of all possible relations and consequences, whether as to the visible or invisible, the present or the future state of being. The power of death being in the hands of the Redeemer, the duration of human life is, in every instance, determined by him; and none, therefore, ought to entertain the thought, either that death is, in one case, unduly *premature*, or, in another, unduly *delayed*. None live, either for a longer or a shorter period than infinite wisdom has assigned to them; and as reason teaches that to His appointment we must submit, however unwilling, it being irresistible, and far beyond our control,—so, as Christians, we should learn to acquiesce in it cheerfully, as the appointment of one who cannot err. That the determined hour had arrived, is a reflection that should serve to banish every useless regret; but that this hour was fixed by One in whose wisdom we confide, and of whose interest in our welfare we have the strongest assurance, is a thought which should not only induce resignation, but inspire comfort and peace.

For, when death does seize any of our friends, whether in the ordinary course of disease and decay, or by violence

or accident, how consolatory to the mourning relatives is the thought, that it came at the bidding of the Saviour, and that it has not arrived without his sanction and appointment! Otherwise we might be apt to reflect, with unavailing regret, on certain needless exposures that might have been avoided, certain remedies whose virtues might have been tried, certain names high in professional reputation, who might have been consulted; or to dwell, with painful self-reproach, on certain accidents that might have been prevented, and injuries which timely care might have cured. The mind will often busy itself with such reflections after the loss of a near and dear friend; but the very intensity of feeling which is thus called forth, is a sufficient proof that any carelessness or negligence that may have been manifested, was far, very far, from being designed or wilful. And although, where criminal negligence has been shown, no doctrine, however consolatory, can prevent regret, or *should* repress feelings of penitential sorrow; yet, in other cases, where the heart bears witness to its own interest in the beloved object, the doctrine of Christ's absolute command over the keys of death, and the consideration that our friend was summoned away by a deliberate act of his sovereign wisdom, may well assuage the grief which such reflections on the commencement, progress, and treatment of the disease, are wont to awaken in the most sensitive and affectionate minds.—*Comfort in Affliction, by James Buchanan, D.D.*

RESIGNATION.

BY LONGFELLOW.

THERE is no flock, however watched or tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair!

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted!

Let us be patient! These severe afflictions
Not from the ground arise;
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise.

We see but dimly through the mists and vapours;
Amid these earthly damps,
What seems to us but sad, funereal tapers
May be heaven's distant lamps.

There is no death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but the suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call death.

She is not dead—the child of our affection—
But gone into that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day, we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air;
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her,
For when with raptures wild,
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child;

But a fair maiden in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face.

And though at times impetuous with emotion
And anguish long suppressed,
The swelling heart heaves moaning like the ocean,
That cannot be at rest,—

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling
We may not wholly stay;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way.

ON THE CHILD OF JAMES MELVILLE,

BORN JULY 9, 1586, DIED JANUARY, 1588.

ONE time my soul was pierced as with a sword,
Contending still with men untaught and wild,
When He who to the prophet lent his gourd,
Gave me the solace of a pleasant child.

A summer gift my precious child was given;
A very summer fragrance was its life;
Its clear eyes soothed me as the blue of heaven
When home I turned, a weary man of strife.

With unformed laughter, musically sweet,
How soon the wakening babe would meet my kiss;
With outstretched arms its care-worn father greet,
Oh! in the desert, what a spring was this!

A few short months it blossomed near my heart;
A few short months—else toilsome all and sad;
But that home solace nerved me for my part,
And of the babe I was exceeding glad.

Alas! my pretty bud, scarce formed, was dying—
(The prophet's gourd it withered in a night)
And He who gave me all, my heart's pulse trying,
Took gently home the child of my delight.

Not rudely culled, not suddenly it perished,
But gradual faded from our love away!
As if, still, secret dews, its life that cherished,
Were drop by drop withheld, and day by day.

My blessed Master saved me from repining,
So tenderly he sued me for his own;
So beautiful he made my babe's declining,
Its dying blessed me as its birth had done.

MRS. A. STUART MONTEATH.

ON THE DEATH OF HUGH MILLER'S CHILD.

BY ITS MOTHER.

THOU'RT "awa, awa," from thy mother's side,
And "awa, awa," from thy father's knee;
Thou'rt "awa" from our blessing, our care, our caressing,
But "awa" from our hearts thou'lt never be.

All things, dear child, that were wont to please thee
Are round thee here in beauty bright,—
There's music rare in the cloudless air,
And the earth is teeming with living delight.

Thou'rt "awa, awa," from the bursting spring-time,
Though o'er thy head its green boughs wave;
The lambs are leaving their little foot-prints
Upon the turf of thy new made grave.

And art thou awa, and awa for ever—
That little face,—that tender frame,—
That voice which first, in sweetest accents,
Called me the mother's thrilling name,—

That head of nature's finest moulding,—
Those eyes, the deep night ether's blue,
Where sensibility its shadows
Of ever changing meaning threw?

Thy sweetness, patience under suffering,
All promised us an opening day
Most fair, and told that to subdue thee
Would need but love's most gentle sway.

Ah me! 'twas here I thought to lead thee,
And tell thee what are life and death,
And raise thy serious thoughts first waking
To Him who holds our every breath.

And does my selfish heart then grudge thee,
That angels are thy teachers now,—
That glory from thy Saviour's presence
Kindles the crown upon thy brow?

Oh, no! to me earth must be lonelier,
Wanting thy voice, thy hand, thy love;
Yet dost thou dawn a star of promise,
Mild beacon to the world above.

THE REAPER AND THE FLOWERS.

BY LONGFELLOW.

THERE is a Reaper whose name is Death,
And with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.

"Shall I have naught that is fair?" said he,
"Have naught but the bearded grain?
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
I will give them all back again."

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes;
He kissed their drooping leaves;
It was for the Lord of paradise
He bound them in his sheaves.

"My Lord hath need of these flowerets gay,"
The reaper said, and smiled;
"Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where *he* was once a child.

"They shall all bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints upon their garments white,
These sacred blossoms wear."

And the mother gave in tears and pain
The flowers she most did love;
She knew she should find them all again
In the fields of light above.

Oh, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The reaper came that day;
'Twas an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away!

THY WILL BE DONE.

LUKE xxii. 42. ACTS xxi. 14. 1 SAM. iii. 18.

MY God! my Father! while I stray
Far from my home on life's rough way
Oh, teach me from the heart to say,
Thy will be done!

If thou should'st call me to resign
What most I prize,—it ne'er was mine;
I only yield thee what was thine;
Thy will be done!

Should pining sickness waste away
My life in premature decay,
My Father, still I'll strive to say,
Thy will be done!

Control my will from day to day;
Blend it with thine, and take away
Whatever makes it hard to say,
Thy will be done!

LEAD THOU ME ON.

SEND kindly light amid the encircling gloom,
And lead me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I do not wish to see
The distant scene; *one step* enough for me.

I was not always thus; nor prayed that thou
Should'st lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now,
Lead thou me on.
I loved day's dazzling light, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will—Remember not past years.

So long thy power hath blessed me; surely still
Thou'lt lead me on
Through dreary doubt, through pain and sorrow, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn, these angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost the while.

No. 234.

THE SERVICE OF SONG.

By the Rev. W. P. Carson.

We find in the Bible nearly four hundred passages which speak of the duty, the privilege, or the history of singing praise to God. In the world we find many excellent books which teach us the *art* of *singing*, and furnish us abundant and beautiful songs. Let us then, dear reader, talk over some of the practical matters connected with this subject, and connected with our own duty as members of the Church of Christ.

I. Singing in the house of God is an appointed act of worship.

"O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation," Ps. xcv. 1. "Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord," Eph v. 9. All singing is not to be considered as properly an act of worship. It is natural to us to sing when the heart is glad. It is proper for us to regale ourselves with music, vocal or instrumental, with or without words. It is proper at times to sing words of a merely moral or secular, and to some extent sentimental and political character. Nearly every community has its ballads, and nations have their patriotic songs. Under the influence of these, armies have gone forth to battle, and multitudes have been aroused to deeds of daring or resistance. To some extent christians may engage in such songs. But this must not be confounded with singing the praises of God as an act of worship. The joyous heart will break forth into singing spontaneously. When we are cheerful and happy, we can scarcely avoid singing. And as religion above everything is calculated to make us

glad, singing religious songs would naturally form a part of religious worship. It would then be a privilege to sing praise. But in God's appointment it is not only permitted us to sing when we are disposed to do so; it is made a *duty*. Prayer is a privilege, a blessed privilege to the burdened soul. It is more; it is a positive duty. So singing must be regarded as an *appointed duty* in the worship of God. Singing has always been a part of revealed religion. It was enjoined and practised under the old dispensation: it was predicted as a privilege and duty under the most glorious times of Gospel light, and it is to be one of the glorified employments in heaven.

II. All must engage in it.

Being appointed as a duty and privilege, both here and in heaven, it must be the duty and privilege of all, who while here expect to go to heaven hereafter. The command is not to one but to all worshippers, to "sing and make melody to the Lord." "Let the people praise thee, O God! let *all the people* praise thee," Ps. lxvii. 3. None are exempted unless positively disqualified by their Maker. A want of inclination will not excuse from duty. A want of ability to sing as well as others, cannot form an excuse. They that have but one talent are not exempt from duty because they consider the Lord a "hard master" in not giving them five or ten. They are bound to "occupy till he come" in improving what they have, and nothing more is required. They that will not serve God with little are not worthy to be entrusted with much. But the Bible does not mention exceptions. Let *all the people*—all who enjoy the blessings of God—all who have the least ability to sing—all who hope to sing the Redeemer's praise in heaven; let all try to unite with others in singing praise here. Perhaps these are exceptions; but the great majority of those who consider themselves exceptions are so by *their own will*, and not

by the will of God. Let silent worshippers consider well whether their excuses are such as God accepts :—are they trying to do honestly their whole duty in this matter? It is said of the church on earth, "Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the *voice* of *melody*;" (Is. li. 3;) and of those who watch in Zion, "with the voice together shall they sing;" and the waste places are exhorted to "break forth into joy, to *sing together*." Whatever is enjoined as a part of worship is binding upon all worshippers; and no excuse of our own, or neglect to qualify ourselves for duty can in any way exempt us.

The Lord has not told us why he is better pleased that we sing his praises than that we merely think of them or speak of them; it is enough for us to know that he has appointed this as an ordinance of worship, and he is pleased to accept it as such; that we are not only to "meditate on his work and talk of his doings," Ps. lxxvii. 12, but we are also to "sing aloud, with the tongue, of his righteousness," to "sing of his power," to "sing aloud of his mercy and judgment," and he has told us that "whoso offereth praise glorifieth me," Ps. l. 23.

III. What shall be the matter of our praise?

We are to sing, "Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs." These words seem to be given to cover the whole subject matter of our singing. While we sing them, we are to have "the word of Christ dwelling in us richly in all wisdom," Col. iii. 16. Our songs are to be expressive of such things as Christ's word contains. As *christians*, we are to sing of Christ;—to sing of his glorious character, attributes, and works;—to sing of him as our Redeemer, our Prophet, Priest, and King, our Defence, and the Rock of our Salvation. This must not be done thoughtlessly, but "in wisdom," understandingly, "being filled with the knowledge of Christ." We must enter into the sentiment of the song,

and our hearts must be alive to a sense of our obligations to love and serve him, and a feeling of our dependence on him. Whenever we sing, we must be sure that the sentiment uttered is according to the word of Christ; and the whole "word of Christ," the whole "record that God has given of his Son," I suppose may be the subject matter of our songs, only let us enter into the song with the spirit and the understanding, that we may sing "with grace in our hearts to the Lord."

IV. The end and influence of singing.

"Sing *unto the Lord*"— "teaching and admonishing one another"— "speaking to yourselves" in songs. Singing is designed to be a social exercise. It may properly and profitably be practised in private, but its influence is best felt when used as a social act of worship.

1. The main end of singing praise is to honour God. We are to honour him by offering "praise in the great congregation." We are to celebrate in our songs the goodness, forbearance, and excellency of God, and to express to one another for our own encouragement, our joy and confidence in him.

2. "Teaching one another." There are other ways of teaching: such as preaching, conversation, and so on. But one object of singing in the congregation of worshippers is to teach one another. We must sing over the doctrines of the Bible, matters of history and promise, in the hearing of each other. We are in duty bound to *sing* them: not to sit still and hear them sung that we may be taught. It is the duty of the minister to teach the silent hearer. We are all bound in our songs to "teach one another." It is the duty of every worshipper to unite in the songs of the sanctuary, that thus he may not only be taught, but may teach every other one who engages in the worship. Here it is not the minister's duty alone to teach others, but the

duty of every other one to teach him and the whole congregation, by singing over in connection with them the truths of the "word of Christ," which first of all should "dwell in us richly."

3. "Admonishing one another." It is the duty of the minister to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort." But this is not all. We are all bound in this part of worship to admonish each other. None can be excused unless positively unable to raise the voice of song or to understand the words sung. We are not permitted to put off this duty and listen to the minister, the choir, or the congregation that they may admonish us, but "with the voice together" we must sing and bear our part in admonishing them. For this purpose it is proper that we sing songs of warning, confession, repentance, invitation, and encouragement.

4. We not only show forth the honour of God and benefit one another by singing, but the very act does our own souls good. While singing is the natural outbursting of the glad heart, it has also a reflex influence and has a tendency to gladden the heart. When practised privately it has a cheering effect on the soul, and when engaged in as a social exercise it has a holy, elevating, gladdening, softening influence on all who engage and those who hear.

It is doubtless designed to be a means of grace to others. Good devotional singing has often a powerful effect on the hearts of the thoughtless. Songs of warning and invitation going up from a multitude of voices, have often melted the heart that stoutly withstood the most solemn appeals from the pulpit. "It is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely." Ps. cxlvii. 1. It is not only "good" and "pleasant," it is "comely." It is attractive. Where the multitude of voices sing the praises of God, there the multitude will be attracted to hear. It is certainly a desecration of this part of worship to engage in it merely with a view to make it attractive to others.

It must be engaged in as an act of worship. Hence it seems clearly wrong to engage persons to sing in our churches simply for the sake of the *good music*. What does the Psalmist say is "good," "pleasant," and "comely?" Is it good music? Is it fine singing? All this may be true in a certain sense; and in the concert, the parlour, and the school, singing may be used only to attract and please the ear. Not so in the church. "*Praise* is *comely*." Singing praise to God by the congregation of devout worshippers as an act of worship is "comely." This will attract, though it may not be used for that purpose alone. God does bless devotional singing as a means of grace, and as a means of drawing the careless to the house of worship. I have read in the papers of a young actress who was thus influenced. On her way to the theatre one evening she passed a humble cottage, where a band of christians were engaged in a prayer meeting. Struck with the sound she hesitated, and caught the tune and a part of the beautiful hymn, "Rock of Ages." The Holy Spirit fastened them on her heart. She went to the theatre, but the song of praise could not be forgotten. Her turn came to perform. She appeared on the stage to sing, but hesitated. The Orchestra, thinking she was embarrassed, struck up a tune and ceased, to allow her to proceed. Still she hesitated:—but as if compelled to sing she burst out in that sweet song:——

"Rock of ages! cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee."

The curtain fell: she left the theatre never to return, but ever after to sing songs of redeeming love.

Was it the *good singing* that attracted her? By no means. She heard far better, more cultivated, at the theatre. But "*praise* is comely." Uttered with "grace in the heart unto the Lord," it was accompanied by the Spirit to her heart and made the means of her conversion. If congregations could be persuaded to engage heartily in

this part of worship they would find in their own souls that it is abundantly "good to sing praises," and they would see many drawn to their sanctuaries, not to hear them sing, but to join in the song.

Then too devotional singing *gives power* to *preaching*. It inspires the soul of the minister and enables him to speak with more earnestness. A dull sermon may be kindled into life by earnest spiritual singing in the congregation. When the people in their united song "teach and admonish one another" in the sentiment of a sermon that may have been feebly spoken, the power of the Holy Ghost is called down from heaven, and dead consciences are awakened to see and apply the truth. Is it not then "good to sing praises to our God?" yea, that "*all* the *people* praise him?"

V. Difficulties.

These are many, and often very annoying.

I. The first and greatest arises from the *little interest* felt by many in the matter. There is a propensity to make excuses which mostly spring from an indisposition to sing.

Nothing is so hard to overcome as inaction. When a heavy load is to be dragged, the greatest difficulty is to start it. Less force will move it afterwards. When a balky steed is to be trained, the trouble is considered nearly over if we can get him to move forward at all. He may be hard mouthed and fractious afterwards, but it is much easier to guide him aright when moving, than to get him started when indisposed to go. So the great trouble in congregational singing is to get the people to give up their trifling, stubborn excuses, and to resolve to go forward as well as they can, and become willing to be guided so as to do better.

Some allowance must be made for defective voices and want of natural talent to sing. Real cases of this kind are

very few. It is no breach of charity to say, that in the great majority of instances, professions of this kind are mere pretence: another name for want of interest, want of care to cultivate the talent possessed, or a want of willingness to do as well as they can. Nearly every man confesses that he knows a few tunes, and no doubt, with proper care and a will to try, such could learn more. The music of the sanctuary should be so conducted that the least gifted can enjoy a part. The design of it is not that men may hear, but that they may "*sing and make melody.*" Good singers can praise God as well in an old familiar melody, known to the humblest worshipper, as in those newer and more difficult.

Some appear too proud to sing in the church. In the parlour they can sing delightfully: in the concert or choir they are leaders, but in the congregation of worshippers they are silent: no better than "dumb dogs that cannot," because they *will not*, "bark."

Some do not sing because they are seated beside a brother of uncouth voice and manner. Some do not like the way things are managed, and therefore feel no interest in this part of worship and will not sing. Some are silent because there is a choir or an instrument in the church, and some are silent because these things are not there. Some are silent because the tunes are too new, and some because they are too old. This excuse making want of interest furnishes a host of sealed lips for every church. A writer in the "*Musical world*" says:— "Where there is a will there is a way, at least in such a matter as this; and if the people are really bent upon having congregational singing, we should soon have it."

2. Another difficulty is found in the custom of the times, which confines the singing to a few of the best singers. This has become so much a custom that an attempt to change it is looked upon as an attempt to invade

the sacred rights of a privileged class. It is a matter of rejoicing that some of the ablest musicians and largest churches in the land are now labouring to change this custom, and to restore singing to all the people, as a privilege for all to enjoy, and a duty for the discharge of which each one is accountable to God. It is not needful that we engage in a crusade against choirs. Under proper regulations they may be of advantage to conducting the praise of the sanctuary in the best way. We must have leaders in the "service of song in the house of the Lord," and it matters very little whether these leaders are two or a dozen, if only the congregation is willing to be led and will try to follow. Present usage, however, makes choirs liable to several objections, and renders it a dangerous experiment for congregations, especially smaller ones, to adopt them.

(1.) They collect the best singers into one part of the house, and many timid voices are not heard at all, because there is no leading voice near them. Good singers should be in different parts of the house, while enough are together in one place to lead the whole. Where there is a formal choir in small churches, the good singers who are not invited into it are apt to be offended and will not sing at all.

(2.) According to present custom, the choir must be separated from the rest of the congregation. They must be on a gallery or elevated seats. Thus separated, they are regarded as set apart to do the singing *for* the congregation, not to lead them. They should occupy seats with the people, and compose a part of the congregation. There seems to be no good reason for galleries in small churches, and especially none, why the leaders of music should occupy them. It is extremely trying to preach or worship in a church where the singers are high up in one end, and the minister in the other, and a few dull listeners in the middle. But according to present custom, who does not often witness just such meetings? Let the leaders be placed in the

midst or in front of the people and on a level with them, and we will find many more encouraged to sing.

(3.) Another objection is, that the *air is confined to female voices.* While this is the case, many men will not sing lest they be considered out of place. Tunes should be selected, the air of which could be sung by male voices, and men as well as females should be allowed to lead, that the most timid may be encouraged to sing. It is delightful to hear the harmony of different parts, but the Bible requires more especially that we "*make melody.*" Harmony should be cultivated, but not to such an extent as to discourage many who are unable to sing except in the leading part. Choirs are apt to give too much prominence to carrying on the different parts, and not enough to leading the timid and the uncultivated in their devotions.

(4.) Churches that have good choirs are tempted to make the music a thing to be heard and talked about, more than a part of worship.

(5.) Another objection is, that when the choir for any cause is disbanded, the church is in a worse condition than before. There are none then able and willing to lead, and many who were accustomed to follow the cultivated music of the choir will not now join the uncouth singing of the clerk.

These objections should be guarded against, whether the singing is led by a band of singers, or by one or two.

3. A third difficulty is, *a want of understanding* between those who lead the singing, and the Session and congregation. Choristers and choirs are generally represented as being very sensitive, and it is not strange that they should be so. They often enter upon their work with an entire misapprehension of what is expected of them. They are not told at the outset that they are simply to *lead* the congregation, often dull and uncultivated, in a great duty. But by the custom of the day the implied understanding

is that they are to accommodate the church by *singing for them*, and if in any way offended they are apt to draw off with the intimation that the people "may do their own singing."

Again singers are apt to mistake the *learning of new tunes* for improvement in music. If fault is found that new tunes are too often sung and the old neglected, they are apt to complain that they are hindered from making advancement, when at the same time they, and especially the congregation, could make great improvement in singing over and over again the old familiar tunes.

These are some of the difficulties with regard to this duty. Let us now try to find some remedies.

VI. Remedies.

1. Let all lay aside their trifling dishonest excuses. Let them seriously ask whether such excuses will satisfy the Judge in the great day. Let them inquire whether it may not be that these same hindrances may prevent them from joining that "new song" to the Redeemer's praise in heaven? And let all resolve as far as possible to take a part in this ordinary worship, and sing to the best of their ability, taking care not to disturb others.

2. Let Sessions, in a kind spirit, take hold of their duty in this matter, realizing that they are set by the Holy Ghost to oversee and order this part of the worship of the house of God. Many troubles would be avoided if Sessions would acknowledge and try to discharge their duty in this matter. Sessions should appoint persons to lead the singing, and should agree with them as to the tunes proper to be sung. Much trouble would be avoided, if the rulers of the church would be careful to have a clear understanding with those who are to lead, at the beginning, and would, when they invite any to undertake the work of leading the congregation, say to them in substance as follows— "Our

church acknowledges singing to be a part of our duty to God, and as far as possible we desire every one in the congregation to take part in this service. We would be glad that you would consent to *lead* us in this part of our worship, and, as far as you can, instruct the congregation in the principles of music, that we may improve. At present the congregation are able to sing such and such tunes. These we wish sung in the public worship, until by a mutual agreement we think it best to add others to the list. We desire you to teach the people other tunes as you have opportunity, but not to introduce them into the public worship except by agreement. It is our minister's duty to select the hymns and appoint the number of them, and when he deems best, he has the privilege of naming the tune to be sung to a particular hymn."

Who does not see that such a course would save a world of complaint and trouble? If then there should be frequent meetings of the Session and the singers to consult as to the tunes to be sung, and the best mode of conducting the whole matter, a good feeling and continual progress might be secured.

This would seem like putting too much restriction on the leaders of song, but this seems to be just what is contemplated in the constitution of our church and by our General Assembly. A Session has no right to appoint in the church an irresponsible agent. They are ordained to *rule*, to *govern*, to *oversee*, and are themselves under authority.

In 1845 the General Assembly in answer to an overture, made the following deliverance:

"Whereas, by our constitution, (Form of Gov't. ch. 9, sec. 6; and Directory for Worship, ch. 4, sec. 4,) the whole internal arrangement of a Church, as to worship and order, is committed to the minister and Session, therefore:

Resolved, That this Assembly do not feel themselves called upon and obliged to take any further order on this subject,

but leave to each Session the delicate and important matter of arranging and conducting the music as to them shall seem most for edification, recommending great caution, prudence, and forbearance in regard to it."

In 1849, a committee of the General Assembly made a long report on the subject of church music, from which I select the following passage:—"On this point proper care must be exercised by Pastors, Elders, and heads of families. Let them co-operate in promoting the cultivation of sacred music in families, in singing schools, in Sunday-schools, in singing meetings, and even in the week day schools: and let the officers of the church take the supervision both of the instruction of the people, and especially of the youth, and of the whole department of the singing in public worship. Thus much will be done to correct any undue innovations by precentors and choirs, and to secure that co-operation of choir and people which is most desirable and practicable."

3. Let there be willingness and a determination on the part of all *to improve*. We should not offer to God that which costs us nothing, but should try to make our offerings of praise in the best possible manner. No doubt, if we can do no better, the Lord accepts us when we only "make a *joyful noise* unto him with psalms." Ps. xcv. 2. He looks at the desire, the "willing mind." But we should by no means be satisfied with this: we should diligently strive to improve in taste and style, that we may make "sweet melody." While the singing of the sanctuary should be so conducted as to accommodate the least gifted, the slothful and careless should look well to it that they do not hinder others from offering acceptable praise. The Lord will frown upon our dull songs, when he has given us good talents and many opportunities to improve them. Wherever it can be done, a religiously conducted singing-school should be sustained as carefully as a Sabbath-school or prayer-meeting.

Every parent should endeavour to sing, at least, a few tunes, at family worship. Every person in the congregation should be furnished with a hymn-book, and as far as can be with tunes. Sheets containing tunes could be procured at a small cost, and distributed among the people; or large tune cards could be prepared to be suspended before the whole congregation as they are about to sing. In this way the people may become familiar with the tunes, and a patient and laborious leader may soon enable them to improve in the manner of singing.

4. Another great remedy is *a spirit of mutual forbearance and concession.*

In a matter of this kind there must be many compromises. But, as is often the case, the compromise must be nearly all on one side. The cultivated and talented singers will need to forego the pleasure of many favourite tunes to accommodate those who are not so cultivated, and cannot be. Good singers are not only bound to sing praise themselves, but there is an obligation imposed on them by the "law of kindness" to assist as far as they can all others to sing. It may seem harsh in this connection, but it is the teaching of the Bible, "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Jas. iv. 17.

To hear tunes badly sung may beget a dislike for them in cultivated ears: this calls for forbearance. Many must be deprived of the privilege of singing altogether, unless these same tunes are used in the public worship. It were far better that good singers undergo many self-denials, than that the weakest of the disciples of Christ should be hindered in this duty. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones." Mat. xviii. 10. Our dislike to tunes may very much be overcome by filling our hearts with the "word of Christ," and entering into the spirit of praise. Tune is often lost sight of in the ardour of devotion.

Much depends upon the good feeling and willing mind

of the good singers of every church. The Lord has great need of them in the place he has called them to occupy. In a company of travellers there must be much patience; one waiting for and assisting another. The strong and healthful could soon outstrip the aged, the young, and the infirm. They may become restless in being detained: but should they go ahead, the good of the company would soon be destroyed and many would fall by the way. We are pilgrims, and "the redeemed of the Lord shall come unto Zion with singing," Is. li. 1, "with the voice together shall they sing." There must be forbearance and patience on all hands. Those who pay but little attention to music must lay aside a fault-finding, captious spirit, and those who have gifts and accomplishments must not only try to worship God, but "do good as they have opportunity." When this spirit shall prevail, we may hear the songs of the sanctuary arise from a multitude of voices.

This is no impossible attainment. In many congregations it is enjoyed. Dr. S. J. P. Anderson, writing from Europe, says of the church of the late Rev. J. A. James, "I noticed that almost everybody joined in singing. The exceptions were very rare indeed." And of Spurgeon, and his great congregation of ten thousand souls, he says, "He selected the simplest and commonest hymns. They were those so familiar and so dear to our American church. *** All the people nearly joined in singing, and the sound was as the rush of many waters."

I may not close, dear reader, without a word as to the absolute

VII. Condition of acceptable praise.

It is, "*with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*" Very important is it that we cultivate the art of music; still more important that we understand the sentiment of the song; but most of all important that we enter into the spirit of praise—that we give utterance to sacred words

only as in the presence of Him who searches the heart. The song that rises without the heart, honours God only with the lips, and is solemn mockery! How great our sin when our songs flow out from thoughtless hearts!

"In vain we tune our formal songs,
In vain we strive to rise—
Hosannas languish on our tongues,
And our devotion dies."

Perhaps you sing sweetly. It is "pleasant" to hear you speaking forth the songs of praise. But do those pleasant notes arise from a heart that rejects the grace of God? These songs so delightful to others must ascend before God as abomination, while your hearts continue to reject his proffered grace. By nature and the ordering of his providence, he has admirably fitted you for offering praise, but this very fitness will appear against you to condemn you in the great day, because you harden your hearts against his grace. How dreadful to think that many voices, that here so much delight the ears of others by singing songs of redeeming love, must at last, while refusing redeeming grace, be changed to utter forth everlasting mourning and wailing, where no hope can cheer the heart, and no song of gladness shall ever be heard! Will you not seek and accept that grace which alone can fit you for offering praise acceptably? Praise will be the Christian's sweetest work in heaven.

Preaching will cease when the redeemed are all gathered home to enjoy the fulness of that grace that bought them. "Teaching and admonishing" will end when all are washed and made pure in heaven. Prayer will be swallowed up in deliverance from sin and sorrow and suffering. But praise, everlasting joy, and songs of gladness will for ever flow on, blessing and exulting in "Him who hath loved us and washed us in his own blood." May you and I have "grace in our hearts" to take part in that glorious new song.

No. 235.

BREAD UPON THE WATERS,

OR

A TRUE STORY OF LUCKNOW.

THE following touching narrative was written by a lady, resident in India, during the scenes to which reference is made. In aiding in giving it a wider circulation than that contemplated in its original publication, we have in view not only a general interest, but the special benefit of that too often rejected class, our soldiers. This little tract concerns them. It may fall into the hands of many of them. They will find in it the truth which was the power of God to the salvation of those whose brief record is here. May it prove a like power to those who shall read it.

In the station of Benares, in the upper provinces of India, I was one morning visiting the hospital as usual. As I entered the General Hospital, I was told that a young man belonging to one of the regiments was anxious to speak to me. In the inner ward I found, lying on his *charpoy* in a corner, a new face, and walking up to him, said, "I am told you wish to see me; I do not recollect the pleasure of having seen you before." "No," he said, "I have never seen you; yet you seem no stranger, for I have often heard speak of you." I asked him if he was ill or wounded. "I am ill," he replied. He went on to say that he had just come down from Cawnpore. "Perhaps you would like me to tell you my history. It may be you

remember, a long time since, some of our men going into the hospital opposite, as you sat reading to one of the Highlanders. There were some half-dozen or more of them; they went to see a sick comrade. You went up presently to them, and told them how grateful you and all your country people were to your noble soldiers for so readily coming to protect you all, and how deeply you sympathized with them, in the noble cause in which they were now going to take a share. Then you talked to them of the danger which would attend them. You reminded them that life is a battle-field to all, and asked them if they were soldiers of Christ, and if they had thought of the probability of their falling in battle. I have heard all about that long talk you had with the men. Then you gave your Bible to one, and asked him to read a passage. He chose the 23rd Psalm, and you prayed. They asked you for a book or tract to remind them of what had been said, and you gave all you had in your bag. But for one man there was none. They were to start that afternoon, so that you had not time to get one. But you went to the apothecary, and got pen and paper from him. When you came back, you gave this paper to him, telling him you should look for him in heaven." As he said this, the poor fellow pulled out from the breast of his shirt half a note sheet of paper, on which I recognized my writing, though nearly illegible from wear. On it were written the 1st, 7th, 10th, 14th, 15th, and 17th verses of the 5th chapter of the 2nd Corinthians, followed by a hymn:

"We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house

not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. . . . We walk by faith, not by sight. . . . We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. . . . The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again. . . . If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest.

Dear name! the Rock on which I build,
My Shield and Hiding-place;
My never-failing Treasury, filled
With boundless stores of grace.

Jesus, my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King,
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see thee as thou art,
I'll praise thee as I ought."

"That man," he continued, "and I were in the same company, but he was a day ahead of me. We met in Cawnpore, then marched on with the rest to Lucknow. Whenever we halted, the first thing Walter did was to take out his paper, and read it aloud to those who cared to hear; then he prayed with us. As we marched, he spoke much of his old father and mother, and only brother, and wished he could see them once more. But he was very, very happy, and ready to 'go home,' if God saw fit. As we neared Lucknow he dwelt much on eternity, and said to me, 'It is very solemn to be walking into death. I shall never leave this ill-fated city.'

"We had many fights standing always side by side. I am an orphan; I lost my parents when a child, and was brought up at school. I never had one to love me, and life was indeed a weary burden; yet beyond, all was darker still, for I knew nothing of a Saviour. Walter's reading and words came to my heart—he was so kind to me, and always called me brother. I never loved till I had him. He had found Jesus, and led me to love him too. I cannot find words to say how I joyed, when at last I felt I had a Friend above. Oh! I never shall forget my joy when I first understood and believed. We had no book, only the paper. We knew it off by heart, and I don't know which of us loved it best.

"At last, in a dreadful fight in one of the gardens, a ball struck Walter in the chest. Words cannot tell my grief when he fell—the only one I had to love me. I knelt by him, till the garden was left in our hands, and then carried him to the doctors. But it was too

late—life was almost gone. 'Dear Willie,' he said to me, 'I am only going home *first*. We have loved to talk of home together: don't be sorry for me, for I'm so happy.

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds!"

Read me the words she wrote.' I pulled them out from his bosom, all stained with his blood, as you see, and repeated them. 'Yes,' he said, 'the love of Christ has constrained us. I am almost home. I'll be there to welcome you and her; good-bye, dear Willie.' And he was gone, but I was left. Oh! it was *so very* bitter! I knelt by him and prayed I might soon follow him. Then I took his paper, and put it in my bosom, where it has been ever since. I and some of our men buried him in the garden. I have gone through much fighting since, and came down here on duty with a detachment yesterday. They think me only worn with exposure, and tell me I shall be soon well; but I shall never see the sky again. I would like to lie by his side, but it cannot be."

Poor fellow, he cried long and bitterly. I could not speak, but pressed his hand. At length he said, "So you'll forgive me making so bold in speaking to you. He often spoke of you, and blessed you for leading him to Jesus. And he it was who led me to Jesus. We shall soon be together again; and won't we welcome you when you come home?" We then read and prayed together. He was quite calm when I rose from my knees. He was too weak to raise his head even from the pillow, but was peaceful and happy. "I feel," he said, "that I shall not be able to think much longer; I have seen such frightful things. Thank God, I have

sure and blessed hope in my death. I have seen so many die in fearful terror."

I turned to go. He said, "Dear lady, when I am gone, promise me this paper shall be put in my coffin. It gave me a friend on earth, who led me to a Saviour in heaven." I promised. Next morning I went to see him, but oh, how sadly altered did I find him! Those soft brown eyes were glassy and lustreless. He was never to know me again. I took his hand in mine; it was clammy and powerless. Three of the men in the ward came up to me, and said, "Till sense left him, he was talking of home with Jesus." They knelt with me in prayer beside the poor sufferer. I went again the next day. His body was still there, but his spirit had fled a few minutes before. He was covered with his blanket, and the coolies were waiting to bear him away. I took his paper from his pillow, where it had been laid, and went to the apothecary. We walked back to the corpse, and he placed it in the hands of the departed. He was buried that evening. I have often thought since, how beautiful was that heavenly love which bound those two dear young soldiers together; how it sweetened their last days on earth. They were indeed friends in Jesus, and though their remains lie parted, yet they are both sleeping in Jesus. Oh, what a glorious resurrection theirs will be in the day of his appearing!

1. In this simple story, what a lesson of gentle yet solemn rebuke there is for those Christians who would be excused from efforts to save sinners! Who could find a better excuse for self-denying labour than a feeble

woman, under the debilitating climate of India, in repulsive hospitals and wild war-camps? Yet what Christian self-denial, and patient, faithful toil are revealed in the expression, "I was one morning visiting the hospital *as usual!*" And the whole account—what a revelation of blessed faith and constraining love for Christ and for souls!

If all the children of God had this spirit, how would such delightful results as are here recorded be multiplied!

2. What encouragement to feeble laborers for Christ! A simple sheet of paper with six verses from the Bible and a familiar hymn! Who could not have written them? Who could not have handed them to some perishing sinner? You who may read this tract, with these very verses which led the soldiers of Lucknow to the Lamb of God, and to eternal rest, may you not by them lead another? May you not put this tract into the hand of some one who has none "to love him, and to whom life is indeed a weary burden; and beyond, all is darker still?"

And oh! what an end of such an act! What a reward for such a deed!

"He often spoke of you, and blessed you for leading him to Jesus. And he it was who led *me* to Jesus. We shall soon be together again; and *won't we welcome you when you come home?*"

For whom of us shall there be such a welcome?

3. How delightful the thought that Christ can save those who know so little! In other words, how little it is really necessary to know in order to be saved! "We had no book, only the paper. We knew it off by heart." A few simple truths of the gospel known

by *heart*—received into the heart, and believed with the heart, will save the soul.

The words in which the dying soldier trusted and rejoiced were stained with his own blood; but they were stained, if I may so say, with more precious blood. It was the blood of Christ. To him these words all point. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and *thou* shalt be saved."

THE CHRISTIAN PANOPLY.

Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.—Ephesians vi. 10—18.

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No. 236.

THE GERMAN WATCHMAKER IN SOURABAYA.

BY MR. E. W. KING OF JAVA.

JOHANNES EMDE was born at Waldeck, near Schmillinghausen, in Germany, in 1774.

When he reached the age of boyhood, he was sent to a school in a neighbouring village, in which the master, as was often the case in the good old times, succeeded to make himself so respected by the eighty boys and girls under his charge, that Emde, even when he was gray headed, never mentioned the name of his good old schoolmaster without previously uncovering his head.

When he left school, his father, being a miller, taught him his own trade, to which, at that time, also belonged the making of mills.

As they, however, were not very prosperous, the lad decided to seek his fortune elsewhere, and as his brother had enlisted himself for Holland, he naturally resolved to go thither. After having reached the borders of Holland, he was prevented from pursuing his journey, as his travelling papers were not in order. As he was considering what he should do under such circumstances, a Dutch gentleman, who had lost his servant, passed that way. They very soon came to terms that he should supply this want, and so Emde reached Holland.

There he soon made acquaintance with sailors, who, in speaking of their travels, stated that they had visited a land where rice, sugar, and coffee grow, and where there is "a continual summer!" Though he readily believed the former statement, he was not so easily to be convinced of the possibility of a perpetual summer existing in any quarter of the world, as the text taught him by his master was still fresh in his mind—"While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease!" Notwithstanding, all parties whom he consulted on the subject confirmed the statement. No alternative was left him than to go himself, and see whether there could be a land on earth where there is no winter. And he did come to this decision. Very soon after he engaged himself as a sailor on board of a Dutch vessel bound for Java.

What he thought of the text quoted above when he reached Batavia, and was satisfied that a perpetual summer did exist there, we cannot say; but this we know, that he heartily longed to return to Europe. But the same unseen and unperceived hand that had led him out of his native land, directed his way to Holland, and protected him while he was exposed to the dangers of the ocean he had to cross, now also overruled circumstances that he then thought least conducive to his happiness.

The Dutch men-of-war in the roads of Batavia were at that time in great need of sailors, and he was taken up in a press, and placed on board of one of them.

Once, while lying in the roads at Banjermassin, in the Island of Borneo, the chief civil servant of that place had occasion to go in the vessel on which he was placed to Tabenio. They reached the place of their destination early on a very foggy morning. As soon as the sun dispersed the fog, they found themselves in the midst of about fifty pirate boats. The pirates immediately made preparations to attack the vessel, which, in consequence of its being calm, was unable to make the needful motion for self-defence. The civil servant not liking the idea of falling into the hands of the pirates, gave order to set fire to the powder. Emde, seeing the great danger they were in, called on the Lord his God, and having received peace in his heart, was strengthened in his mind. He stationed himself, with two pistols in his hands, at the place where the powder was deposited, threatening to fire at the first person who ventured to approach him. He said there was time enough to set fire to the powder when the pirates were actually on board of their vessel, but before doing so it was their duty to fight for their lives. This advice was followed—many of the boats that came within the reach of a musket shot sunk in the sea, and also several men fell around Emde, but not a shot touched him! At last a slight breeze was felt. The vessel was brought in motion, and the cannon balls soon made an end to the combat.

In making mention of this victory in after-years, he very often remarked that all these heroes who were brave enough to cast themselves headlong into hell fire were afraid of *a pistol ball!*

Some time after, the ship went to Sourabaya, and Emde,

being sick, was sent to the hospital; and when the English took possession of Java in 1811, he was discharged from service, and settled himself in that place.

In this town he made acquaintance with another German, from whom he soon learnt the art of repairing watches. They both settled themselves as watchmakers in Sourabaya. As they succeeded pretty well in their trade, they got married to two sisters, descendants of a native royal family, but who were reduced to poverty since one of the native emperors of Java abdicated in 1749 in favour of the Dutch.

In 1814 a Dutch missionary, sent out by the London Missionary Society to the Island of Amboyna, had to remain a long time in Sourabaya, before he could get an opportunity of proceeding to the place of his destination. During his stay there he made acquaintance with the German watchmaker. By him Emde was taught the gospel truths more clearly than he had ever learnt them before. The said missionary also held meetings in his house, in which he read and explained the Bible; and on leaving Sourabaya, he persuaded Emde to continue this work. He did so as well as he could; but while he was thus endeavouring to water the souls of others, his own soul was watered. Emde grew daily in grace. As his meetings gradually increased, the minister of the place, who knew nothing of the truth, filled with envy, soon found a reason to bring an accusation against him. Emde defended himself manfully before the magistrate, and from the Bible he proved that the minister by his sermons closed the kingdom of God, and prevented those from entering into it who were desirous to do so. Though the magistrate was unable to refute this accusation, still, as Emde had thus assailed the dignity of the reverend gentleman, he was consigned to the prison for a few weeks. But though it was in their power to bolt the doors of the prison when he was in it, he knew they could not prevent him from making the best use of his tongue. He lost no time to preach the glorious gospel to his fellow-prisoners. This he did so earnestly that it was feared many would be soon tinged with his "*fanatical*" views. Therefore it was deemed expedient that he should be taken out of prison, even before his time of punishment was expired.

Satan cannot see a good work going on, without doing his uttermost to dissuade the children of God from continuing to do their Master's work. Were all Christians to keep this truth in mind, they would not only be encouraged by many difficulties which they have to experience in endeavouring to promote the kingdom of God, but they would find grace to pray for the poor instruments that Satan makes use of in attempting to thwart their plans. Emde's enemies were still restless, and seeing that he was not to be daunted by having to appear before the magistrate, an accusation was soon brought against him to the Governor-General; but he, considering him to be a harmless person, got the whole matter hushed up.

So Emde was permitted quietly to pursue his trade, and to devote his leisure hours in expounding the Bible to all anxious inquirers. He did not, however, restrict himself to preach the gospel in formal meetings, for even during business-time he seized every opportunity of calling sinners to Christ. The following incidents will prove what a masterly tact he had of giving a religious turn to conversation:

Once an officer of high rank called on him, and desired him to clean his watch, which, he said, was "*devilishly*" dirty. "I will do so," Emde calmly answered, "but the question is, which is dirtier, the watch or your heart?" And this gave him an opportunity of explaining how God alone can cleanse the heart, and it remaining unclean must be cast into hell-fire! On another occasion, a gentleman had to apply to him to have his watch repaired; as Emde was examining it, he went up to a religious paper that was hanging on the wall, and the watchmaker very soon asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The gentleman eyed him from top to toe, and contemptuously asked, in reply, whether he took him to be a child. "In truth," said Emde, "I thought so; at least I wish you would become one, for only children can enter into the kingdom of heaven!" The gentleman immediately left the house, while Emde earnestly wished that he would reflect on the subject.

It was by thus boldly witnessing for the truth that Emde succeeded in getting so many to attend his religious meetings.

He did more. His hearers consisted chiefly of the de-

scendants of Europeans, many of whom did not sufficiently understand Dutch to derive any benefit from reading the Bible in that language. The Malay translation not being in the popular dialect, was unintelligible to them. Emde was determined to provide for this want. He therefore regularly sat down, at stated times, with some of his friends to translate the New Testament into popular Malay language. It was a very hard work. Manifold were the difficulties he had to overcome in translating, printing, and distributing his work. It was after labouring *ten* years that he did accomplish his design. In truth, it was a wonderful work, if we consider the person by whom it was done; with reference to this work he remarked, "*But* we prayed for it."

He was also the means of erecting a Mission Society, and had two rooms purposely built to his house to accommodate any missionaries who had to wait in Sourabaya for opportunities to pursue their journeys to other places.

Emde did not, however, limit his labours to the nominal Christians around him; he had married a native of that island, and how could he leave the Javanese unprovided for, who in some respects were his inmates? The Javanese profess the Mohammedan religion, but as they have many remains of their heathenism, from which they were converted to Mohammed, they may all still be considered to be heathens. The greatest difficulty that presented itself to Emde was, that he did not understand their language; but he did not allow himself to be daunted by it. Some missionaries had translated tracts into the Javanese language; these he purchased, and distributed among them. With the aid of his wife and children, he also translated some good Dutch tracts. He got texts from the Bible printed in the same language, and distributed them in the markets. It was a very favourite occupation of his to post these lights in the most populous places. But he was not satisfied till he persuaded a German missionary, Mr. Bruckner, to translate the New Testament into the said language. All his labour seemed to be fruitless; for several years he was not able to convince a single native of the truths of Christianity.

In the year 1840, an old Javanese entered into Emde's

house. He was a resident of a neighbouring village, and was a priest there for the last twenty-four years of his life. He had read one of Emde's tracts, and was so convinced of the truths contained in it, that he expressed a desire openly to profess his faith in Christ. He wished, however, previously to be better instructed in the truths of the gospel. Through the medium of his wife, Emde gladly complied with his request. The priest returned to his village. He called the population together, and read the tract to them which had worked so effectually in his heart. This singular deed caused a great consternation, not only in that village, but in several of the neighbouring villages, and great numbers of Javanese came from all quarters, not only to hear what the priest was reading, but also to receive further instructions on the subject. Feeling this to be too hard a task, he sent them all to "*the German watchmaker!*"

What Emde felt, at seeing such a crowd desiring to hear the word of God explained to them, is fully expressed in the following words:—"For many years I was on the field of battle against Mohammed, without any hope of gaining the victory; but the Lord wished first to convince me that he could dispense with my service, and that he works neither by might nor by power, but by his Spirit. When I had almost despaired of doing any good, my house was thronged every day with anxious inquirers; sometimes even more than a hundred Javanese came from a distance of two and three days' journey to hear the gospel of the grace of God!"

This was the beginning of a revival that continues to this day.

Some who were awakened were desirous openly to profess Christ by receiving the sacrament of baptism. The ministers to whom they applied for this holy ordinance, had very strong suspicions against them, and thought they had some evil motive for wishing to rank themselves among the Christians. Their request was consequently not granted. In the meanwhile, for about three years, they went on to pray and read the Bible together, but the desire to have the Lord's Supper administered to them grew so strong that they were determined to be baptized, and not to allow themselves to be deprived of this privilege by the minister.

Such boldness had all the appearance of rebellion, and gave a plausible plea to bring a charge against them before the magistrate. Naturally, all the blame was laid on the poor watchmaker. He was consequently again hauled up before the civil powers. This time he wisely refused to defend himself, and requested the judge to question the persons who had applied for baptism, concerning their motives, as they were of age, and could answer for themselves. All their answers to the several cross-questions put to them fully convinced him that they were harmless beings, and that their request could be granted without fear of the State being thereby brought into jeopardy!

The 12th of December, 1843, was a day of great festivity for Emde. On that day, fourteen men, twelve women, and five children received the holy ordinance of baptism. Since then this community has rapidly increased, and at present it amounts to about 2500 souls.

On the 20th of April last, Emde entered into the rest of his Lord. It is gratifying to note, that at his burial more respect was shown him than is commonly done to many a one who distinguishes himself in promoting only the temporal welfare of his fellow-creatures.

How strikingly the words of God contained in 1 Cor. i. 25–29 are illustrated in the life of this blessed servant of the Lord—"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."

ENTERING IN AT THE STRAIT GATE.

An excellent missionary brother thus relates one of the last sermons he addressed to the Hindus at Benares: "I spoke on the words, 'Enter ye in at the strait gate:' the chapel was full, and great attention prevailed among my hearers. I explained to them the signification of the strait gate, and what they must do in order to get through. First, I represented, according to Hindu ideas, a worldly-minded

person, who cares nothing about religion; and who hopes nevertheless, at the end, to get to heaven. There, I said, is one coming along riding on an elephant; he appears in grand style; he cares nothing for God and eternity; he wants to enjoy the world; and yet he hopes to get to heaven in the end. Thus he is riding on towards the strait gate, hoping he may get through. While speaking thus, one of my hearers called out: 'He must come down from his elephant, or he will never get through.' You are right, I replied; yes, he must forsake his worldly mind, and descend from his height, and humble himself.

"Then I described another character, belonging to those of whom our Saviour said: 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.' Here, my friends, said I, comes a man who appears desirous to go to heaven; he has his eyes fixed on the strait gate, and is walking up to it; but on his back he carries a large bundle of various things—see how he groans under it! Will he succeed? 'No,' said another man, 'he must leave his bundle behind, or else he will never get through.' You are perfectly right; if we wish to get through the strait gate into heaven, the heart must be wholly given up to it; a divided heart God will not accept; he will either drive sin out of the heart of man, or sin will drive him out. The people understood this very well, and applauded. The third class I wished to represent were the proud and self-righteous. Here I had nothing to do but to allude to a certain class of people who are constantly seen at Benares—I mean the haughty Mohammedans. Without mentioning names, however, I continued: There comes another—you see he gives himself the air of a great and holy man; he says, I do no man any wrong, I repeat my prayers daily, I fast often, and give every one his due; thus conscious of his righteousness, he lifts up his head, and with a firm step you see him walking up to the gate. A man called out; 'He must stoop down, he must bow down, or else he will break his head. 'He must leave his pride behind, and come as a poor sinner; stooping signifies humility, and if he is not humbling himself, he will never enter through the strait gate.'" Thus we see that the Hindus understand our preaching, and the word enters into their hearts.—*Weitbrecht's Missions in Bengal.*

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No. 237.

WITH CHRIST OR AGAINST HIM.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

THE evening of July 11th, 185—, will be long remembered by the members of a little church amid the mountains of West Virginia; because it was their melancholy duty to follow to his burial the body of a beloved Elder, the strong stay and chief support of their feeble church.

As old and young gathered around his venerable form, to look for the last time upon his revered face and gray hairs, going down to the grave in peace, and with the tearful blessings of all, a scene of more pathetic tenderness is rarely witnessed, than that which presented itself near the pulpit, where the deceased Elder had sat a few evenings before, and listened to a sermon from one of his favourite texts: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come."

Thence he was borne to the grave, around which they stood, as the pall-bearers tearfully laid him down and tenderly placed the turf upon his bosom. And when this sorrowing, bereaved band turned away, the beams of the setting sun pointed hopefully upward, while here and there summer clouds seemingly reposed in mid-heaven, reminding us of the words of Job, the royal mourner of the desert, "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more." Job vii. 9, 10.

Slowly and sadly all returned to their homes, with feelings fitly expressed in the words that had been sung ere he was laid in his peaceful grave:

"With us his name shall live
Through long succeeding years:
Embalmed with all our hearts can give
Our praises and our tears."

In the sermon preached upon the occasion, some facts were stated respecting this venerable Elder which impressed me very forcibly; such facts as, I think, should be brought to the attention of that large and influential class of persons who may be properly termed "The mere respecters of the religion of Jesus Christ."

It was stated in the discourse, that the deceased possessed a strong and well regulated mind, which he had stored with useful and practical knowledge, by a judicious course of historical reading, observation, and reflection. And it was elevated and refined by an intimate acquaintance with some of the best poetical writings. Of these his favourites were Milton's Paradise Lost, and Young's Night Thoughts. He was far advanced in life, before he made a public profession of his faith in Christ, yet he had always been a respecter of religion.

Well informed as he was in the history of our race, and of pure and elevated feelings, he could readily understand, how the religion of the Bible is the direct or indirect source of every blessing enjoyed politically, socially, and morally.

Hence he felt it to be the imperative duty of every one, having the good of his country at heart, to encourage and support the ordinances of the Christian religion. Upon this principle he acted for many years. He attended public worship very regularly, and contributed liberally towards the support of the ministry, yet he made no pretensions to personal piety.

All this time, he seems to have been under the impression, that by thus doing, he was of some service to the interests of religion and doing no harm; consequently he remained

in a state of easy indifference as to the claims of personal and experimental piety in the heart. As a patriot and as one who wished well for society, he sympathized with the prosperity of the Christian church and deemed it his duty to secure its ordinances and bring their influences to bear upon the community where he lived, and so long as he believed his influence to be exerted in favour of religion, he appeared satisfied to remain as he was.

Upon one occasion, in conversation with a minister, his attention was directed to this inquiry, "Is your influence really in favour of religion, or do you merely suppose it to be so?" He was asked to inquire what would become of the Christian religion if all were like him;" if all the friends of religion were to do as he was doing, there would be no preaching, no administration of the Lord's supper, no baptism, no public prayer, consequently there would be, in a little while, no pure christianity.

He was, moreover, told by that faithful minister, that if his course was right for one, it would be right for all; but if all were to do so, religion would perish.

Now he was prepared, not only to admit, but to feel that whatever had a tendency to destroy the religion of Christ was a sin against God, and a fearful wrong to his fellow-man. In this manner he was awakened to a sense of the truth taught in this Scripture: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." From that time on he became interested on the subject of personal piety, and after much reading of the Scriptures, prayer, and reflection, the imputed righteousness of Christ was clearly discerned; he therefore made a public profession of his faith in Jesus, as his last and only hope. It was not long until he was chosen and ordained a ruling Elder, the duties of which office, so far as he felt himself qualified, he discharged with commendable fidelity up to the day of his death. For more than twenty years, he was

the main pillar of his weak and feeble church. During the later years of his life, it was his earnest desire to see a Presbyterian Church built, and the community supplied with Presbyterian preaching. This was realized within the two years previous to his death, and one of the happiest days of his old age was that on which this church was dedicated to the worship of Almighty God, when he carried around for the first time, and gave to his fellow Christians the memorials of his Saviour's love. Such in substance were some of the statements made in the discourse preached on that evening. They arrested my attention because of the clear and forcible illustration they furnish, of the practical results which follow a serious and intelligent consideration of the Saviour's words: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Matt. xii. 30. It is my purpose in this tract to present a few reflections like those which were blessed in the experience of that beloved and useful Elder. To him this passage of Scripture was startling, because it so effectually precludes all notion of neutrality or conservatism in man's spiritual relations. His acquaintance with history enabled him to observe that parties having antagonistic principles, interests, and aims, continually spring up, and come into fierce collision.

And in almost every instance there may be those, who wish to be regarded as conservative, not identified with either party nor committed in any way, but at perfect liberty to act as inclination may prompt.

Now in human affairs it has been found, that conservatism has held and exercised a balance of power, which has to a great extent shaped the destiny of nations. And upon conservative ground, the best, the most liberal-minded and unprejudiced persons are most commonly found, who act from disinterested and pure motives; and hence it is a wise ordering of Divine Providence that a

balance of power, should often be in the hands of the *conservative*, as they are called. But *conservatism* in religion is only another name for neutrality or indifference. Where this principle prevails, very baneful results to the cause of vital godliness necessarily follow. A result to be especially noticed is this—when the gospel is preached in a community, and this principle of action is adopted, there will be a class of influential persons who are respectable for their decent and moral lives, and beloved for their liberal views and conciliating manners; and yet however decided their opinions may be in everything else, they have no decided religious character.

Such persons attend public worship with commendable regularity, and pay towards ministerial support with becoming liberality. They advocate Sabbath-schools and all other benevolent institutions; their names usually head the most liberal contributions; yet with all this they studiously endeavour to have it understood that they are not religious men, and that by so doing they make no pretensions to personal piety whatever.

They are perfectly at their ease, anywhere and everywhere—week day or Sabbath—in the house of God or at the corners of the streets—with the saint or the sinner. Yet they live and often die, supposing that upon the whole they have done pure and undefiled religion a great deal more good than harm by the course which they have pursued; whereas in truth they have been "scattering abroad," exerting an influence very deleterious to the interests of the very cause, for which they have professed so much sympathy. The correctness of this assertion appears from considerations like the following, to be briefly presented:

First, that there is no neutrality in man's spiritual relations, is plainly taught in the word of God.

"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." An apostle, in

addressing the true church, by inspiration uses this strong language; "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy," 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10.

"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. viii. 6, 7.

Now the clear and incontrovertible meaning of these passages, out of numerous others, is to the effect, that there is a direct and uncompromising opposition between the true church of Christ and the kingdom of this world, so that the principles of one or the other must have the pre-eminence in every heart; which absolutely precludes the possibility of any and all neutrality.

This of itself ought to bear with overwhelming force upon the mind of every one, who receives the Scriptures as authority in divine things. But such is the constitution of our minds, that we oftentimes understand a principle in its nature better by observing the consequences to which it leads, when acted out, than by our mere knowledge of it abstractly considered.

Hence, secondly, that there should be no neutrality in man's spiritual relations, may be readily seen from this fact, that the *efficiency* of the church of Christ for good, may be greatly diminished by the *delay* of those who are hindered, by the example and influence of the undecided, from uniting with the church in youth or middle age.

The force of example is one of the most powerful of human influences that have a bearing in shaping the destinies of souls, and such is the adaptation of the christian

religion to man's nature that the visible prosperity of the church is made contingent upon the force of example.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." It is self-evident, that this Scripture enjoins it upon Christ's disciples, and upon all who feel an interest in the coming of his earthly kingdom, to let their example be such, that all who know them may form a true idea of the christian religion, and of their duties to God, and be induced to glorify God by going and doing likewise.

It is my decided opinion, that all who are believers in a true and saving sense will connect themselves with some branch of the visible church, because it is their duty to render strict obedience to the commands of Jesus Christ. One of his most important commands enjoins a public profession of faith in his name, and love for his service, by coming out from the world, and sitting down at his table.

The idea of being a faithful christian, without a decided and public profession of faith, to every renewed mind is the very perfection of self-delusion, whatever may be the professions of any one to the contrary.

Although it is sadly and deplorably true, that there have been and are many communicants, not christians in a saving sense; yet there are no consistent believers, not communicants.

Now it is to be observed, with reference to the force of example, that its greatest influence is swayed upon the young and the undecided. Now from this fact it is to be inferred that in those communities, where the influence is exerted upon the young and the undecided, inclining them to a profession of faith in Christ, there we may expect to find the young remembering their Creator, rendering to him the service of their lives, and forming their characters and habits under the sacred and hallowing influences of

religion. In such communities, we may expect to see the vital power of religion most deeply felt, and to find the brightest example of true piety. This expectation has been fully realized in numerous instances, and perhaps every reader is prepared to point to one or more within the sphere of his own observation.

But on the other hand, from the same admitted fact, that the force of example bears with its greatest power upon the young and the undecided, is to be drawn another inference, that in those communities where the influence of example inclines from a profession of religion, there we but seldom find the young coming out from the world, and dedicating to God the service of their earliest and best days.

It is there we find them forming their habits, and moulding their characters, under the delusive and soul-destroying influences of the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

In such communities, too, are many young persons, who have a sense of duty inclining them to choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; yet they strive against the monitory warnings of conscience from year to year, until the Spirit ceases to strive; or, if they do connect themselves with the church, it is often at a period when they are settled in life, when the cares of the world, and the calls of earthly duties distract their attention so much, that they find the yoke of Christ more grievous to be borne than it would have been, had they learned to bear it in their youth.

"Religion should our thoughts engage
Amidst our youthful bloom;
'Twill fit us for declining age,
Or for the awful tomb."

That no neutrality can be allowed in man's spiritual relations is evident from the fact that if all professing friendship for religion, and who really suppose themselves

to be the friends of religion, were to act out this principle of supposed neutrality, the church of Christ would lose all its distinctive features of existence as a visible and efficient organization.

The truth of this will at once appear to every reflecting mind. For if this principle were carried out, there would be no religious worship, no public prayer, no singing of praise, no stated and divinely-authorized preaching of the word of life. There would be no administration of the Lord's supper, no baptismal vows solemnly taken. The various houses of worship in towns and cities would be forsaken, and no Sabbath bell would call the devout to prayer and praise.

In our rural churches no orderly and devout congregations would convene, because there would be no minister of the gospel to lead their devotions, and cheer them with glad tidings from a purer and better world! To sum up the matter, there would be nothing good of a public visible character found upon the earth.

Thus does it appear, that if the church of Jesus Christ were left to the tender mercies of these kind-hearted and liberal neutrals or *conservatives* of the church and the world, it would soon become extinct.

And now my non-professing readers, for whom this tract has been written, to teach a lesson, drawn from the life of one who was once of your number, but saw his error and came out from among you, suffer in conclusion a word of admonition.

Already I fear that your example, that most powerful of human influences, especially the example of the intelligent, and of those beloved for their moral worth, has brought the cause of heart-felt and vital piety, in many communities, to the verge of threatened ruin. There is many a faithful minister, who often finds his soul quaking with apprehension as to what the consequences are to be.

unless you, the intelligent and influential portion of his congregation, be aroused to a proper sense of the fact, that the efficiency of the church, for two generations at least, depends, so far as human influence is concerned, upon whether your example will incline to or from a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ, who became poor, that you by his poverty might be made rich.

Such has already been the effect of your example in many congregations, that perhaps out of scores of young men, there are comparatively very few of whom cheering hopes are to be entertained, that they will in the days of their youth sit calmly down, and by reading the word of life, meditation, and prayer attend to the subject of religion as the chief concern of the immortal soul; because your influence, unconsciously to yourselves, has swerved their young and pliant minds so far away from God.

Remain just as you are, and do as you have done a few years longer, then it may be, as you return from some newly made grave, the sad reflection may cross your mind, that the church of your preference no longer exists in your community. Moreover, while in this thoughtful mood, should you trace out the influence your example has had, and seriously reflect that because every person has done just as you have done, the church of Christ has gone down, or has become corrupted, and its influences for good in your community have been almost destroyed, then, then, you will be prepared to feel the awful truth, that your honourable and liberal support of the gospel and supposed friendship have been the same in their final results as open and avowed enmity! Results as deadly to pure and undefiled religion, as those which the enemy of souls, himself, has been striving to accomplish with faggot, false doctrine, and sword, ever since the church, the Lamb's bride, has been trailing her robes of purity in the dust of our wretched, miserable, and blood-stained world.

It matters not to him who suffers death, so far as death may be considered in itself, whether it be inflicted by the hand of one, who festooned the brow with flowers, and blessed his name with honourable professions of esteem, or whether it be by the hand of one burning with rage and fiendish enmity; for it is death after all. The ultimate consequences are the same.

I hope, my readers, you now perceive the truth of our blessed Redeemer's words, and will be admonished accordingly. Whenever you are tempted to soothe the monitions of a sense of duty, by the delusive opinion so fondly cherished by some that they may do religion some good and no harm, by an undecided course, ever remember that it is Jesus our final Judge and the great Head of the church who says, "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

DANGER OF DELAY.

HASTEN, O sinner, to be wise,
And stay not for to-morrow's sun;
The longer Wisdom you despise,
The harder is she to be won.

Oh! hasten mercy to implore,
And stay not for to-morrow's sun;
For fear thy season should be o'er,
Before this evening's course be run.

COME, FOR IT WILL SOON BE TOO LATE.

"Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterwards repented, and went.—Matt. xxi. 28, 29.

MANY are in hell while you read these lines, and many who were once invited to come to Jesus, but they would not. Whatever they may wish, it is too late for them now. The door of mercy is closed, they are shut out, and shut out for ever. They now cry, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Soon, it may be very soon, the door of hope will close on you. Sickness may arrest you, death will seize upon you. You have the present moment, you are not sure of the next. You may lose your reason. Some accident may deprive you of your senses. The last knock will soon be given at the door of your heart. The last warning will soon be sounded in your ears. The last invitation will soon be presented to your eye. God may soon say, "Let him alone." Justice may soon call, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Even Jesus may add, "They would none of me, so I gave them up." O fearful case! O desperate condition! Too late! Convinced of guilt, too late! Alarmed at danger, too late! Crying out for mercy, too late! Regretting thy procrastination, too late! Ah, it will soon be too late!

Come, O come to Jesus, now. You have space to repent. You have the opportunity of embracing the Saviour's loving invitation. To-morrow may be too late.

What would some, who once trifled as you do now, give to be in your circumstances! But, the die is cast, the gulf is fixed, the sentence is passed, and there is no hope. If you should go to hell, with the invitation of Jesus in your hand! If you should perish for ever, because you will not come to Jesus that you might have life! To prevent the possibility of this, come to Jesus at once, this moment come, the next may be too late!

"Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."—Matt. xxv. 11, 12.

No. 238.

"GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT."

"My Spirit shall not always strive with man."—Genesis vi. 3.

Our holy religion is spiritual. This is one of its most heavenly and distinctive characteristics. It is not a system of heartless forms and idle show, a mere priestly device to obtain the control of society, having no higher nor holier ends than to lull the consciences of the ignorant, and humour the freaks of ambition. That religious system, dear reader, which claims your attention, and proposes to conduct you in the way of happiness and salvation, requires the exercise of the intellect and the affections; it is founded upon principle, and demands a thorough change of our moral nature. Its holy precepts enter into the secret chambers of the soul, to regulate the emotions, thoughts, desires, and motives, which operate as the springs of human conduct. A man may be a good Mohammedan, perhaps, by keeping up an exhibition of zeal for his religion,—by venerating the Koran, and making an occasional pilgrimage to the Caaba at Mecca. He may be a good Mormon, perhaps, by uniting with the brotherhood, and conforming to all the rules of that corrupt society. But if he would be an evangelical Christian, he must have a new nature; in the significant language of the apostle, he must become "a new creature in Christ Jesus,"—old things must pass away, and all things become new. 2 Cor. v. 17. "Marvel not," said the great teacher to Nicodemus: "Ye must be born again." John iii. 7. The Holy Spirit must come down from above, to wash, purify, and renovate the soul; he must enlighten the

understanding, renew the wayward will, awaken the affections toward heavenly objects, and, as it were, create us again. We must have new views, new feelings, new aims, new habits of thought and life, in short, *a new nature.*

Where can you find an earth-born system of religion which addresses itself to men in such language as this; "Love the Lord thy God, and serve him with all thy heart and with all thy soul?" Deut. x. 12. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John iii. 3. Just here is the point where, as it respects the theory of holiness, divine revelation comes in, to improve upon the ethics of paganism. The pagan moralist has *said* fine things; he has prescribed some excellent rules of moral action; but they all pertain to the external conduct. But Christianity comes, pointing to the true seat of holiness, or of moral rectitude, the human heart; and with a gracious and almighty provision, also, by which the moral nature of a man may be radically changed.

This will account for the vast importance attached in the sacred Scriptures to the operations of the Divine Spirit. We may say to you, dear reader, with reference to the work of the Spirit, "It is no vain thing, for it is your life." We would be glad to hold up to the fixed gaze of the whole world, in large, imposing characters, written with a glittering sunbeam, the words of our Divine Redeemer, "Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii. 5. If this be true (and mortal man dare not call it in question), is it not infinitely important that we all cherish the lively stirrings of the Holy Spirit in our souls?

Wherever the gospel is heard or read, there this Divine Agent may be found, wooing the unwilling heart into the embraces of Christ. No man can reject the invitations of the gospel without warring against the Divine Spirit. And therefore we would say to every individual, especially

every unconverted person—and oh! that it could be sent like a bolt from heaven!—"Quench not the Spirit." Oh, could we speak with an angel's power, the solemn warning should this moment descend upon all men like a thunderclap, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God!"

Our attention will now be occupied with some important thoughts connected with the solemn subject in hand. We shall first notice some of the evidences from which it may rightly be inferred that the Holy Spirit is striving with us; then we shall consider some of those ways in which the Spirit may be quenched; and, lastly, our attention will be directed to the infinite danger connected with quenching the Holy Spirit of God. It is not difficult to imagine an awful voice issuing from the burning bush, saying, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Ex. iii. 5.

1. We are first to consider some of the evidences from which the conclusion may be rightly drawn that the Holy Spirit is striving with us. The evidences of this fact are almost innumerable. When the Divine Spirit is moving upon the waters, it is made manifest by a multitude of signs—signs which unconverted persons cannot always perceive, because they are spiritually blind, and cannot well understand the cause of their uneasiness, but which are much better understood by enlightened believers. We mean to address at this time more particularly those who have not yet made up their peace with God,—those who are yet resisting the invitations of the gospel, and stoutly refusing to embrace the Saviour of sinners. It is our purpose now to afford them some assistance, if possible, in determining when the Holy Spirit is operating upon their hearts and consciences.

The first sign we shall mention, *is a sense of sin and danger, and dissatisfaction with our present condition.* When an individual begins to have some heartfelt ap-

prehension of his sinful state, and his consequent exposure to the condemnation and displeasure of God, and to everlasting punishment; when he feels restless, discontented under a sense of guiltiness, and is alarmed lest death may come suddenly upon him and cut him off in his sins; it is a good indication that he is the subject of a divine influence from on high,—that the Holy Spirit is drawing him away from this doomed world, and the fires of an endless perdition. This is evidence that his attention has been arrested, his conscience quickened into action, and his understanding in a measure enlightened; and all this is the effect of a blessed agency from on high. Wherever the Holy Spirit is at work, we shall always find some consciousness of guilt, and some apprehension of divine displeasure, —a feeling of dissatisfaction with the present state of things, and a desire to be in a more secure and happy condition. The awakened soul has a conviction that all is not right with him, and that his situation is a perilous one; and in his uneasiness and anxiety his mind may wander here and there, like Noah's dove, unable to find a place of rest. There is a nettle in his bosom which he cannot remove. There is a load oppressing him which he cannot throw off. At home and abroad, upon his bed and on the highway, alone and in company, every where and at all times, he hears a voice softly whispering that this is not his rest; that there is a storm impending, and he had better make haste and flee to the mountains, lest he be consumed and perish in the plain. Every sermon he hears sounds like the voice of God, admonishing him of his sin and danger,—ringing a death-alarm, to startle him from his dangerous sleep. He may sometimes even wonder why the very earth does not open beneath his unhallowed feet and swallow him up, that he may no longer sin against God, and inflict a blight upon society by his pestilential example. His fears and anxiety may be confined to his own bosom.

He may not tell it to his most intimate friend. Many a convicted soul has gone mourning many days, being in darkness and having no light, when his dearest companion was at a loss to understand the cause of his disquietude. But this makes his condition only the more painful. He is borne down by a load of secret grief, and no one being acquainted with his real state, he has not the comfort of sympathy; he goes unrelieved by that honest and full disclosure of his distress which is often so reviving: his sorrows are all his own.

Now, my dear reader, if you have any experience resembling this, there is some cause to conclude that the Holy Spirit is at work within you; if your feelings and state of mind be as we have described, there is reason to apprehend that you have arrived at an interesting and important period. We may have stirring emotions, strong feelings of animal sympathy, from no other cause than simply contemplating the countenance of a fellow-mortal, and listening to his moving accents. But this annoying apprehension of guilt and peril, this ever-present conviction that we are sinners in the sight of God, and are not one moment secure in our unreconciled state, does appear to us to be a peculiar and characteristic effect of the Holy Spirit's operations upon the human soul. Please to examine Zechariah xii. 10, and John xvi. 7–11.

A spirit of inquiry is another indication of the Holy Spirit's presence,—a disposition to learn more and yet more concerning heavenly and divine things. On the day of Pentecost, three thousand souls under conviction exclaimed, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts ii. 37. The jailer at Philippi sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, crying out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 30. When the mind has been awakened by the Holy Spirit, there is always a desire felt, however much it may be sup-

pressed, to enlarge our acquaintance with those solemn realities which we already contemplate with such lively emotions. A most humiliating sense of ignorance will spring up, which shall strongly incline us to seek an increase of our religious knowledge. This spirit of inquiry will manifest itself in many ways: in a disposition to attend upon the preaching of the gospel, and to listen very closely to the remarks of the speaker; in a more attentive reading of the Holy Scriptures, and an increased interest in their solemn teachings; in giving sober heed to the pious conversation of God's people, and endeavouring to gather counsel and instruction from their lips. An individual who is the subject of conviction may often throw himself into the society of the pious, in order to catch up something, if possible, that will enlighten his anxious mind, and minister solace to his perplexed and unhappy spirit. This is oftentimes done no doubt when the design is studiously concealed. This will show the importance of Christians being at all times exemplary and consistent in their manners and conversation. Whilst it is by no means proper to "throw pearls before swine," or to introduce religious topics unseasonably, when we can only make ourselves ridiculous and expose our blessed religion to dishonour, we should nevertheless remember that there is a cowardly delicacy, a traitorous, time-serving policy, which is infinitely displeasing to our glorious Head and King. None who desire to be acknowledged by him as his servants before his Father and the holy angels, should be ashamed to confess him, and to plead his sacred cause, before their perishing fellow-men here on earth. Let no Christian brother be afraid to speak even one little word for Christ, when in company; for the very individual who is sitting nearest him, may have sought his society for the sole purpose of obtaining religious instruction and comfort. He will not disclose the fact, for his troubles are sacred, but there is a load upon

his spirit. Mark the unusual gravity of his manner. Ah, that angel of mercy, the Spirit of the living God, has come down from heaven, and is now stirring the sluggish waters of his soul. Then let a Christian brother's lips be opened, and let heavenly counsels be imparted, as the opportunity presents and the ability is given, to that anxious and inquisitive mind. We once read of an individual, who had become much alarmed about her state, making repeated visits to a very pious lady, to obtain spiritual counsel and consolation. But that lady, not knowing the object of her visitor, and supposing from her former character that religious conversation would be painfully disagreeable, never once introduced the subject of religion, until her guest began to wonder at her inconsistency, and to speak of it to others; so that indirectly it came to her ears, and occasioned her no little distress. This spirit of inquiry certainly characterizes all those upon whom the Divine Spirit has descended in power. They will be disposed to read the word of God, and to extend their researches on every hand,—to attend upon the public administration of the ordinances,—to seek the society of those from whom they shall be most likely to obtain spiritual direction and consolation,—to avail themselves indeed of all the means of religious instruction within their reach. They may struggle against this disposition, and attempt to conceal it, but still the disposition is there; the desire for more knowledge, for clearer and more certain views of divine things, is felt by day and by night, in the house and by the way.

We remark again that *a praying disposition* is still another indication of the Holy Spirit's presence with the human heart. To Ananias, the Lord said with reference to the awakened Saul of Tarsus, "Behold, he prayeth!" Acts ix. 11. When one becomes a subject of conviction, and feels that he has sinned against God, and is alarmed for his safety, he will very probably be found casting him-

self upon his knees before the offended Majesty of Heaven, an humble suppliant for divine mercy. He may never have prayed before, and even now, it may be, he would be much ashamed to be caught at it; but so strong is his sense of guilt, and his apprehension of danger, that he must pray now. He prays almost unconsciously. He is anxious to be pardoned,—he feels that he has grievously offended One who loved him,—he imagines he is hanging by a slender thread over the gulf of everlasting despair,—he hears a voice crying in his ears, Haste thee, escape for thy life; and in such a condition he must and he will pray; and down upon his knees he goes, where mortal eyes cannot see him, nor mortal ears hear him, and the language of supplication gushes from lips that may often have made unhallowed use of their Maker's holy name. Prayer is the offspring of the Holy Spirit. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Romans viii. 26. How is it with you, dear reader, in this respect? Under a sense of guilt and danger, do you experience any powerful drawings toward a throne of grace? Have you fled to God, or do you feel strongly impelled so to do, that you may supplicate his mercy, and secure repose to your troubled spirit?

The insipidity of his former sinful enjoyments is still another indication that the Spirit of God is striving with the sinner. He loses his keen relish for carnal and worldly pleasures. Things in which he formerly delighted, and which were the idols of his heart, have now lost their interest and fascination. He may sometimes turn to them in the midst of his perplexity and trouble, to see if they will dissipate his gloom, and divert his mind from its sombre meditations; but he soon discovers that he has lost his appetite for such things—they are tasteless and insipid.

His mind is now thoroughly awakened, and his conscience has been quickened into lively action, and he is too much oppressed already with a load of conscious guilt to feel pleasant in making it heavier; and such is his conviction now of the infinite importance of divine and spiritual realities, that things of earth and time have dwindled into comparative insignificance. How is it with you, my dear friend, in this particular? Have you lost your keen relish for vain and sinful amusements and pleasures? Do carnal and worldly joys present fewer attractions to your view? Do you now regard them as dry and insipid, unable to afford you the satisfaction which they once gave? This is a favorable symptom. God is doubtless dealing graciously with your soul; and let me entreat you to regard your present experience with the utmost interest, and cherish the wooings of the Holy Spirit.

2. Our attention will now be directed to some of those ways in which the Divine Spirit may be quenched. This is a fearful and melancholy work, this quenching of the Spirit, and yet it is the very business in which multitudes of perishing and accountable souls are industriously employed. Some will adopt one method, and some another, to extinguish the flame which is kindling within them.

Sometimes the awakened sinner *plunges into his worldly business with unusual zeal*, hoping to drown the murmurs of conscience, and divert his attention from heavenly things amidst the din, and cares, and schemings of this busy, bustling world. He thinks if he can get his mind entirely occupied with his secular business, and become deeply delighted and interested in it, there will be no room for anything else; his spiritual troubles will be gradually swallowed up and lost in the excitement and tumult of worldly employment. He is like a man that puts his fingers in his ears to keep from hearing some unpleasant

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sound. We doubt not there are thousands in the land this very moment who are attempting thus to quench the Spirit of God. And oftentimes this plan succeeds. The voice of conscience is drowned amidst the din and hum of business; the mind is so engrossed with worldly cares that sacred things are gradually forgotten. The intoxication of success and applause exhilarates the wounded spirit; the fatal purpose is thus accomplished, the angel of mercy takes his flight, and it may be, never more to return. Oh, the madness, the self-destroying zeal, with which many an awakened soul struggles to put away religion from his thoughts! He toils for it—he literally sweats, plans, and almost agonizes, to quench the Spirit of God, and to ruin himself for ever!

And sometimes the convicted sinner will resort *to various amusements and pastimes*, in order to banish his religious impressions. He may attend balls and parties, and attempt to dance them away; he may frequent the theatre, or the gaming table, or court the pleasures of the chase; he may try one thing, and then another, and still another to accomplish his deadly purpose. Many a one, we doubt not, has tried to forget himself in dreamy reveries over the fascinating romance and the sentimental novel; and we verily believe that this plan of quenching the Holy Spirit has often proved effectual. It is not unfrequently the case that gay friends will attempt to rally one who has become the subject of serious impressions, and persuade him to go with them to certain places of amusement, or else place a fresh novel in his hands to beguile his mind, and drive away that solemn air that seems to be settling upon his brow. This is true, especially in the case of young persons. Many a melancholy narrative have we read of some awakened individual, one who had become impressed with the importance of religion during a season of revival, giving way to the entreaties of gay young companions,

and going with them to parties, and various other places of amusement, until every sober thought had fled, and the Spirit of the Lord had departed. This advice indeed is sometimes given by those who should know better. It is said of a celebrated poet, that on being approached on one occasion by an awakened individual, who earnestly inquired what he must do to be saved, he seemed perplexed,—hesitated,—and at length turning to him he said, "My friend, you had better go into merry company." Alas, what dangerous counsel! Better leave him in the society of his God, until he shall have made his peace with him; for then should he be better fitted to mingle in the society of the world.

Be it remembered, also, that *putting off the claims of religion for a future day* often quenches the Spirit. This expedient is alarmingly prevalent. We tremble to think how many are silencing the voice of conscience, and banishing their religious impressions, by the dangerous plea that there is time enough yet; that they may still enjoy the world a few more years, and then they can give the interests of the immortal soul all necessary attention. If he be an unconverted person, but one whose mind has been impressed with the importance of divine things, whose eyes are now passing over these pages, we are well nigh certain that he has thought of this. We appeal to him if he has not comforted himself with the reflection, that he has many more years to live, and he will yet have it all arranged before death shall lay his icy hand upon him. Is it not so, my friend? Had we a commission from heaven to proclaim to some worshipping assembly on any Lord's Day, that the last ray of hope would be extinguished with the setting of that day's sun,—that the door of mercy would then be closed, that the invitations of the gospel would be withdrawn, and no farther opportunity be granted to a solitary person in the house to obtain salvation; and were it known

to all that this was indeed the voice of God, and there was no mistake; would there not be an excitement in that congregation, an outburst of tears, prayers, and religious anxiety, such as mortal eyes never beheld, and which would render it impracticable to proceed with the public services? Every one knows it would be so. Why, then, the comparative indifference we now see manifested? Why is there such an air of composure on the faces of unconverted men? Ah, it is this: My preacher has no such a commission—the sun of the gospel will not set this evening with the sun in the sky—to-morrow will be as this day and much more abundant—years after this I expect to hear it still announced, "And yet there is room; whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." This is the cause of the contentment. There is time enough yet, and why be disturbed? Many a one has thus grieved away the Spirit of God. Many a one is now doing it. Oh, that they would consider the things which belong to their everlasting peace!

But again, one may say *that he is decent and correct in his deportment, attends upon the ordinances of religion, and treats sacred things with perfect respect, and hence there is no reason why he should be alarmed;* and thus the Spirit of God may be quenched. This is the excuse of many. When conviction seizes upon them, and they become concerned about their spiritual condition, they endeavour to quiet their fears with such presumptuous and delusive pleas. Because they are free from gross and outrageous immoralities, and pass for decent and respectable men in the community: because they attend at the house of God, perhaps are even members of the church, and mingle in good society; they attempt to persuade themselves that their case cannot be a very bad one,—that if they are are not saved, the prospect must be dark indeed for many open profligates around them. They mistake the nature of true religion. They

are blind to the spirituality of the christian life. They banish religious impressions by laying to their hearts the flattering unction that they are honest and correct in their lives, and no man can impeach their moral character; knowing not that they are really "poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked," and the righteousness of the Lamb of God is their only "white raiment," whereby they may be "clothed," and the only "gold tried in the fire," whereby they may be "rich," Rev. iii. 17, 18, ignorant of the true import of that divine lesson, "He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi. 16. They understand not the language of the gospel when it declares that "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. iii. 11—nor is that great commandment at all regarded, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," Matt. xxii. 37. Alas, that so many, under the sound and light of the gospel, should remain ignorant of the only method of salvation, and in their deplorable blindness flatter themselves that because they attend church, treat religion with a show of respect, and maintain a fair and decent exterior, perhaps are even wearing the external badges of christian discipleship, the gates of the celestial city must surely lie open to them! How sad to think that multitudes are thus quenching that Holy Spirit of God whereby alone they can be sealed unto the day of redemption!

Another may quench the Holy Spirit by *imputing his serious impressions to a weak and superstitious state of mind, which does not become a man of intellect and independence.* He may endeavour to persuade himself that religious zeal belongs appropriately to the aged, the afflicted, and those of feeble and credulous minds—that it is too humiliating to a strong-minded, high-spirited, joyous, and

manly free-thinker. Why should such a high-strung and noble soul as he possesses, be caged and cramped in the prison-bands of a low and superstitious bondage? How in the world did it ever come to pass that these sentimental dreams, these canting, whining hypocrisies, obtained such an influence over his mind as to interfere with his peace? There are not a few, especially among gay, talented, and educated young men, who seek in this very manner to quench the Holy Spirit of God. Their consciences are disturbed—they are beginning to feel uneasy and insecure —they are all out of order from some cause—there is a tender chord somewhere which vibrates to the appeals of the gospel; and in order to reassure the troubled mind, and get free from such unpleasant feelings, they would fain rally themselves with such reflections as those we have mentioned. My dear friend, you can never rise superior to the vastness of eternity, nor swell your puny self into the magnitude of God Almighty! Giant minds, highly educated and accomplished,—minds with whom it might be simply ridiculous to compare ourselves,—have kissed the sceptre of the Prince of peace, and laid their all a votive offering at his feet. Possibly you may thus seal your eternal condemnation in one moment, my friend; but never can you thus hush effectually the murmurs of your conscience, nor escape the terrors that lie before you. There is a time to die. "It is appointed unto men," says Paul, "once to die, and after that the judgment." Heb. ix. 27. And when that solemn season arrives, what then will become of the proud but precious soul? They are doing a sad work who are attempting to persuade the young that it does not look manly in them to become serious and unite with the church—that this may suit old and infirm people, and such as are superstitiously inclined, but they should not thus imprison their free and joyous spirits. May

the Lord in his mercy forgive such murderers of our youth!

3. We shall now briefly consider some of the reasons why it should be every one's prayerful concern not to quench the Holy Spirit. It is a dangerous and terrible experiment.

If men reject and grieve away the Spirit of God, *there is no other Agent to perform his work,—to do that which must be done in order to salvation;* and hence they deprive themselves of all hope. There can be no salvation without a change of our moral nature which the Holy Spirit alone can effect. Man is dependent upon this divine agency for that view of his own perishing state, and of the loveliness, suitableness, and sufficiency of Christ as a Saviour which is necessary to the exercise of a saving faith. John vi. 44. 2 Cor. iv. 6. No man can be fitted for the service and fellowship of God, or be admitted into the divine family, who has driven away the Spirit of God. This is so clearly taught in the Scriptures that none can deny it. It is evident therefore that if we continue to quench the Holy Spirit, and will not accept the blessed mediation, we seal our own everlasting ruin. Cherish the Holy Spirit, and live for ever—quench and reject him, and perish eternally. The whole affair reduces itself to this. Will you then quench the Spirit of God? Will you by your own act extinguish the last and only ray of hope that shines upon you? My dear friend, now tracing these lines with an awakened but yet unyielding heart, do be entreated to consider the consequences of such a suicidal course, and drop the murderous hand which is fighting against your own eternal interest!

If you quench the Spirit, remember, also, *that God may swear in his wrath that you shall never enter into his rest, and withdraw the angel of mercy from the soul for ever.* We may not long have the opportunity of fighting against

the Spirit of God. He may suddenly depart, and midnight darkness envelope the rebellious soul to all eternity. God says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Gen. vi. 3. Prov. i. 24—31.

We shall offer no opinion as to "the unpardonable sin;" Matthew xii. 31, 32. There is room for endless speculation here, as is evident from the number of definitions which have been given of the sin against the Holy Ghost—no less, I believe, than thirty-five or forty. But this much is very clear; to offend against the Holy Spirit is a great and grievous sin. And why not? God gave to man a law, most holy, just and good. Man basely trampled upon that law; the Son of God, instead of executing the penalty of the law upon him, yielded up himself to the sword, and poured out his soul unto death, in order to save him from that penalty; but he too is "despised and rejected of men," and now when in farther proof of the amazing love and patience of God, the Holy Spirit comes right home to the heart of man, to subdue his obstinacy,—to put in his hand by the hole of the door, and draw aside the bolts and bars that shut the Lord our Maker out,—and he too is rejected and condemend; how much farther can the offence be carried? There are no remaining Persons of the adorable Trinity to be likewise spurned in their order. And you will observe that in this holy and good law of God, man has received an oral and written communication from the eternal Throne; in the beloved Son, we have even God in our own flesh,—God *with* us; but in the Holy Spirit, God *in* us—a most intimate, soul-felt, heart-wooing, naked, Divine Presence: it is an ascending scale of special and endearing divine manifestation. Very great, then, must be the sin of grieving away the Holy Spirit! Man doth thereby spurn the last Person of the blessed Godhead. He has spurned the most intimate and endearing manifestation of the divine presence and condescension. He has indeed repeated all

his offences in one: for the Spirit comes with the law in one hand, and the cross in the other, and to cast dishonour upon him, is to cast dishonour upon the Father and the Son as well—it is the finishing touch to a fearfully cumulative sin.

When therefore one becomes the subject of deep religious impressions, but grieves away the Spirit of God, there is a fearful probability that he may never return; that he shall be given over to a hardness of heart and reprobate mind, to work out his damnation with greediness. It is a melancholy fact that most of those who become seriously awakened and impressed during a revival, but afterwards relapse into carelessness and sin, never again experience the same lively concern on the subject of religion; the Holy Spirit takes his flight, and they are abandoned as vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. We should certainly be very sorry to drive any person to despair, or make him quit his efforts to obtain "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," Phil. iv. 7; but we feel it to be our duty to warn you, dear reader, with great earnestness, that if the Holy Spirit is striving with you, it is dangerous to attempt to stifle your convictions. Whilst you are doing it, the good Spirit may soar away, and eternal desolation settle down upon the ruined soul. This angel of mercy does sometimes take his departure very suddenly, never, never more to return to the inhospitable bosom!

Remember also that although the Holy Spirit may continue to strive with you, *death may suddenly cut you down, and what then will become of the immortal soul?* Human life is exceedingly uncertain. Although we may be young and gay, and the rose of health is blooming upon our cheek, we are not one moment sure of another day, or even another hour. We may lie down upon our beds at night, and be found cold and lifeless in the morning. We

may at any time be precipitated into eternity by some violent and unexpected casualty. Death may come

> "When the heart beats high and warm,
> With banquet, song, and dance and wine."

And is it not a fearful and melancholy season to be arrested and ushered into the eternal world, when we are actually fighting against the Spirit of grace? This is not a situation in which any will find it safe or pleasant to meet death. Oh, may not the dear reader of these pages be caught in such employment when the awful summons shall arrive!

Once more we remark, that if at any time in life we have experienced the strivings of the Spirit, but succeeded in quenching the heavenly flame, *our recollection of it will very probably be revived, and occasion us no little bitterness and anguish of spirit, in a dying hour.* Amidst the din and cares of the world it may be forgotten; we may manage to keep the mind entertained, and our conscience tolerably quiet for many long years; but when we come to die, and sorrowing friends are standing around, and the accents of prayer are heard in our chamber, misimproved opportunities will rise to view, the ghosts of murdered hours shall haunt our minds, and no earthly power can dispel the horror that may agitate our bosom. Our cry may be, "I have offended God, have trampled upon his proffered mercies, and now he will no longer hear my voice; all hope is fled, the door of mercy is closed, and I see hell's devouring mouth opening to receive me as I come. Talk not now of a glorious heaven, a lovely Saviour, or an almighty arm, for these I wickedly rejected, and now they are within my reach no more—to speak of them but aggravates my grief." Many a one has been thus prevented by a settled despair from embracing the offers of the gospel on a death bed. My friend, would you lay up for yourself

such a store of bitterness and horror? Do you wish to fill that gloomy chamber where you must meet your fate with the moans of terror and despair? Then I have but to say, Quench the Spirit!

THE GRIEVED SPIRIT BESOUGHT.

Stay, thou insulted Spirit, stay
  Though I have done thee such despite;
Cast not the sinner quite away,
  Nor take thine everlasting flight.

Though I have most unfaithful been
  Of all, who e'er thy grace received,
Ten thousand times thy goodness seen,
  Ten thousand times thy goodness grieved:

Yet oh! the chief of sinners spare,
  In honour of my great High Priest;
Nor in thy righteous anger swear,
  I shall not see thy people's rest.

If yet thou canst my sins forgive,
  E'en now, O Lord, relieve my woes;
Into thy rest of love receive,
  And bless me with a calm repose.

E'en now my weary soul release,
  And raise me by thy gracious hand;
Guide me into thy perfect peace,
  And bring me to the promised land.

TO-DAY.

To-DAY is the whole of time that you can call your own Attend while you are called; enter in while the door is open, lest it be for ever closed. It is possible that the day of mercy may be ended as to you even before the day of death comes. God sometimes gives up those who have refused to hear, and who have no desire to return unto him, to a hardened heart, even while life continues. Thus Pharaoh was hardened before his death. *To-day* then,—forthwith—immediately—while the word is sounding in your ears—while the invitation comes to you—now—"now is the accepted time." How know you but that this may be the special, the appointed, the only season of grace for you? "Now, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

O reader, think of that word TO-DAY. Well may we be earnest with you. Satan, and the flesh, and the world plead hard against Christ, and against you. They all say, TO-MORROW. No! to-morrow will not do; for God says, TO-DAY. Begin this very day to hear, believe, and obey his voice. There will always be difficulties. Those difficulties will increase, and not diminish. You never can, you never will, in your whole life, have a more suitable season for breaking through all obstacles, and giving yourself up to God, than the present moment. "Behold," says Christ, "I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." Fear then to lose the divine mercy, and weary the divine patience, by inexcusable presumption. Fear to provoke the divine wrath and displeasure. To defer reconciliation to God to any future period, is the most reprehensible and ruinous folly. It supposes that God will indulge us with the allowance of sensual and sinful appetites, and cause his mercy to wait till we have executed our iniquitous purposes. It shows that we do in our hearts prefer Satan to Christ, sin to holiness, and earth to heaven. And can we seriously think that God will be thus mocked? No; we only deceive ourselves; we fill up thus the measure of sin to our ruin.

No. 239.

"WHERE ARE THE NINE?"

LUKE XVII. 17.

AN ADDRESS TO PERSONS RECOVERED FROM SICKNESS.

"WERE there not ten cleansed? where are the nine?" This was the inquiry of the Lord Jesus. He had wrought a remarkable miracle on the lepers who had cried to him for cleansing. "Go," said he, "show yourselves unto the priests." As they went they were cleansed. One only turned back to render praise for his cure, and he not a Jew, but a Samaritan. Well might our Lord ask with seeming wonder, "Where are the nine?" Was not my power as manifest in those nine as in this one? How is it that he alone has returned to give glory to God? His loud voice of praise condemns their ungrateful silence. They have the outward benefit, he the inward blessing also. The leprosy has left their bodies, but his spiritual leprosy shall be taken away from his soul. Arise, thou Samaritan; "go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."

Such seems a natural comment on our Lord's words. It is not unlikely that you, reader, may feel astonishment at the conduct of the nine. And yet it is possible that their conduct may have found its fellow in yours. Do not be offended; it may be that you resemble the nine in unthankfulness more closely than the one in gratitude. You look, perhaps, with some feeling of anger upon the nine ungrateful ones; and yet the Lord who searcheth the hearts may view the like conduct in you, and say, "Thou art the man."

If you are recovering, or have recovered from sickness, you are one who has received great mercies at the hand of God. Perhaps you will be startled to hear that most of those who live without any regard to religion before illness comes, reap no lasting good from it when it passes away. Alarm is a very different thing from conversion; resolu-

tions made in our own strength are but so many bubbles, which the first breath of temptation bursts. Where the mind had been under serious impressions before sickness came, the writer has witnessed some deeply interesting proofs of the blessed effects of sanctified affliction; but where the afflicted person was careless and worldly before, however greatly he may have been distressed and alarmed by the illness, his convictions have generally passed away with his sickness, and he has gone back again to the world with as much delight as ever. No doubt there are exceptions to this, as Manasseh and others. Still it is to be feared that these exceptions are few, and that what has been stated is usually true.

What effect then has your sickness had upon you? Are you to be found amongst the nine, or are you like the one?

Review the state in which you were the other day before your illness. You were living a careless life, it may be an immoral one; at any rate you had not thought much about the concerns of your soul. Like the rest of the world you had a great deal to do. Perhaps you were occupied in business, your farm, or your merchandise; perhaps you had to labour hard in the workshop or the field; you were taken up with the care of providing for your family, so much engaged in the concerns of life, that you hardly ever gave a thought to sickness, and death, and eternity. Everything spoke to you of many years to come, and it seemed unnecessary for you to think much of those things which were apparently so far off. Or it may be that pleasure was the chief subject of your thoughts. Gay and trifling, without a thought beyond present gratification, you were fluttering on like a butterfly in the sunshine. Full of life, you were all absorbed in your amusements, and these, it is not impossible, far from harmless. Sometimes an uncomfortable reflection would rise up in your mind; but it passed away like the summer cloud, and you were as much without God as ever.

Then came your bed of sickness. Your illness was severe, alarming. Perhaps it was a fever, perhaps a dangerous accident. You were surprised to find how short

was the distance between health and the grave. A few days had wasted your strength, and you were helpless as a babe. The axe seemed to be laid to the root of the tree, and you could almost hear the voice of God saying, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" How terrified you were! You looked backward, and what could you see but opportunities neglected, mercies despised, provocation upon provocation. You looked forward, and death stared you in the face; you understood what was meant by his name, "the king of terrors." "After death the judgment;" you had to give an account of yourself to God, and you were utterly unprepared to give it. Eternity!—Eternity!—a boundless prospect of hopeless misery; this was the most dreadful of all. What could you do? You tried to pray, and scarcely knew how; you were too much frightened to pray, or too much in pain, or it seemed hopeless for you to try. Perhaps you could not conceal your terror, and spoke of it to all around you; perhaps you kept it hid in your own bosom, and this was almost more dreadful than telling it. What resolutions you made; openly it may be; if not, in secret! "Oh! if God will but spare me this time, what a different life I will lead in future! How could I have been so foolish as to waste the precious time which he gave me for repentance! I am quite determined to live another kind of life. I will read my Bible, I will attend public worship; will give up my worldliness, my covetousness, my amusements, my sins; I will be another man." Then you tried to pray: "Lord! have mercy upon me! Oh spare me a little, that I may recover strength! Cut me not off in my sins!" God heard your prayers. You have been raised up; you are in health again.

When you first began to leave your bed, you thought, perhaps, you should never be thankful enough for God's goodness; you were ready to weep like a child at the remembrance of it. You could not help telling those about you how thankful you were; it seemed that you could never forget the mercy of God. So were your first hours of recovery spent. A few days saw you once again in your family. By and by you went for the first time to

the house of God; there was a measure of seriousness about you, but you were, perhaps, rather inclined to wonder that it was not deeper. You began to get about in your usual occupations. There were many things which your illness had thrown into disorder, especially if you are the father or mother of a family; it was necessary for you to bestir yourself to put them to rights. You had little time for thought; a passing remembrance of God's goodness sometimes crossed your mind like a shadow, but the world soon occupied you entirely. You are now quite well, and with your sickness your serious impressions are all gone. The love of the world is as strong as ever. Nay, it may be, that if you were a gay companion before your illness, you are as gay a companion again. If you were taken up with amusements before, you are as much taken up with them now. Or what is worse still, if you lived in the indulgence of known sin before, you have, perhaps, already plunged as deeply into sin as formerly. What is become of your promises, your repentance, your prayers? They are all gone. The world has wiped out every impression from your heart. You are as much the child of the evil one as ever; and those affecting words spoken of Israel may be uttered over you: "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away," Hosea vi. 4. And now, which of the ten cured by our Lord do you most resemble, the nine or the one? Let conscience speak. You are not found returning to give glory to God.

Learn from your own case that *conviction is not conversion.* Surely you had deep convictions when you lay on your bed of sickness; if you had not, it was only a more affecting proof of the dangerous state of your soul. It may be that your mind was seriously impressed. You were convinced that carelessness about the soul was an awful sin, and that God would surely visit it with his judgments. That was the true view of the case. Sickness lifted up the curtain of the world to come, and you saw things in some measure as they really are. Now if con-

victions could have saved you, you would be in the way of being saved. But it is plain that they could not: they have left no abiding trace upon your soul, you are quite as much unconverted as ever. Your fears were excited, but your heart was not touched. Opportunity for sin was taken away, but the love of sin was not slain. You would have been glad of pardon that you might not be driven into hell: you had no desire for that renewal of heart which always accompanies pardon. You wished for heaven only as a refuge from sufferings, and not as the place where a holy God is the satisfying portion of heart-renewed sinners. You may be convinced a hundred times; many things will convince: you can be converted only by the powerful grace of God the Holy Ghost. O fellow sinner, seek for that grace which alone can convert your soul.

Learn that *illness has not left you as it found you.* God sends affliction for our profit. It is a solemn warning from him: it speaks aloud to the soul. If it has not done you good, it has certainly done you harm. The sun softens some things, and hardens others. Fire bakes clay, and melts lead; neither of the two comes out of the furnace in the same state as it went in. Now if your affliction has not softened your heart, it is to be feared that it has only hardened it. You know that there are many medicines which lose their effect upon the constitution by being often taken: so far as regards that medicine, the constitution becomes medicine-proof. So it may be that you are becoming affliction-proof, hardened against benefit from affliction. So far as man can judge, this illness which has now passed away has only brought you the nearer to this condition. Ah! "an affliction lost, is a loss indeed." Perhaps the Lord may send another, and it may pass away as this has done. By and by the word may go forth, "He is joined to idols: let him alone," Hosea iv. 17. Oh that the dread of this may be the means of arousing you to pray, "Anything rather than this, Lord; anything rather than this! Oh, let not thy chastisements and thy mercies pass away unheeded! Oh, say not of me, 'Let him alone!'"

Learn *the desperate evil of your own heart.* What!

has affliction done you no good, after all the sight of eternity which it gave you? Has recovery done you no good, though you cried to God for it, and promised that if he would grant it, you would change your whole course of conduct? What a desperately evil heart must yours be! It is not meant that it is worse than the hearts of others in the natural state, for that word is true of every human heart, so far as it is unrenewed by the Spirit of God, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," Jer. xvii. 9. But what is meant is this: this unimproved affliction, this unheeded mercy, may by the grace of God show you this solemn truth in a way you have never seen it before. You have been ready in your thoughtlessness and vanity to say, "My heart is good enough notwithstanding my practice; temptation, and not badness of heart is the cause of my neglecting God's commands." But this may perhaps convince you that it is not so good a heart as you have vainly thought. It is an ungrateful heart, a heart that forgets God's judgments, and sets no store by his mercies. It is a hard heart, which will neither break nor melt. It is an unbelieving heart, which puts away from it all the solemn truths of God's sacred word. It is a false heart, which does not keep its serious promises. It is an unholy heart, which loves darkness rather than light, and sin rather than holiness. It is a heart which indulges secret enmity against God and Christ, and says in its deep inward recesses, "I will not have this man to reign over me." Oh that God may teach you this lesson from your hitherto unimproved affliction! To be aware of the depth of your spiritual disease, may, through his mercy, be one step towards the only true method of obtaining a cure.

Learn to *admire the long-suffering mercy of God.* How wonderful it is! He has not yet said, "Cut him down." Your neglect of God might have provoked this, but he has not done so yet. He is giving you further opportunities, richer mercies. Perhaps you have more checks of conscience than formerly; you are not quite so much at ease

as formerly. God is dealing with you as the gardener in the parable is described as dealing with the tree: "Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down," Luke xiii. 8, 9. Now why is this long-suffering shown to you? Pray that it may lead you to repentance; pray that it may not be in vain. Oh! if you improve not his long-suffering mercy, hear the solemn words addressed to you: "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. ii. 4, 5. That long-suffering has an end: it may be near its close. When once the door of mercy is shut against you, the door of judgment will be open, and what then will remain for you but "weeping and gnashing of teeth?"

Lastly, learn to *cry to God for mercy*. This is your only hope. You have seen that affliction of itself cannot soften your heart, and that recovery of itself cannot do it, for your heart is as much unsoftened as ever, notwithstanding both. Great terrors cannot do it, for you have experienced them, and are unchanged. Your own resolutions cannot do it, nor any efforts made in your own strength. What then can soften and renew your heart? The free and sovereign grace of God alone. If he take it in hand, it will be done. That stubborn will of yours will fall at once; that unsanctified heart will be subdued; repentance will burst forth from your inmost soul, and stream down from your eyes. A godly sorrow will begin to discover itself, 2 Cor. vii. 10. The love of Christ will begin to exercise a constraining power upon your heart. Yes, it is the love of Christ revealed by the Holy Spirit to your soul which will do the deed. A bleeding Saviour seen by the eye of faith will be death to your sins, peace to your conscience, life to your soul. You will be a new man in Christ Jesus. Perhaps you have never seriously thought of the sufferings and death of Christ. You have

never regarded him as enduring the wrath of God, that guilty sinners might be saved from it. You have never considered him as crying out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" in order that such as you are might know the blessedness of his Father's tender compassion and eternal favour. God the Holy Spirit can reveal all this to your soul, and his quickening influence can make you alive to the power of it. What a depth will this give to your repentance! what a reality to your views of eternal things! It will be a source of holy, persevering, self-denying obedience, of peace, and hope, and joy. All this is the free gift of God; he has promised to bestow it upon the soul that earnestly seeks it. May you from this time be found seriously entreating these mercies! Perceiving your guilt and danger, may you be brought to your knees in earnest prayer! "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon," Isaiah lv. 6. 7. Think over these words, pray over them, and may God of his infinite mercy so lead you to himself that by and by you may be enabled to look back and say, "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word, Psa. cxix. 67.

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No. 240.

AM I A SOLDIER?

THIS seems like a strange question to put to a man "in the ranks"—on the field—perhaps on the eve of battle!

Stop, my friend, what is it that makes a soldier? Be honest with yourself, and patient, while we enquire.

First, a soldier should be a brave man. Bravery is not recklessness. It does not mean that you should walk up to the cannon's mouth disarmed, and peep into the muzzle while the enemy is standing with a lighted match at the touch-hole. But it does mean that you should be prepared to meet danger, in the full consciousness of its presence—calmly, steadily, unfalteringly!

A brave man is usually a high-minded, and really honourable man. Not a duellist, or murderer! He can afford to treat an insult with contempt, rather than revenge. He can pity and forgive his enemy, though it may be his duty to slay him in defending his own life, or in protecting the honour and welfare of his country! He knows no fear, but the fear of God! Have you, my friend, this fear? The best of all books tells us, that "the fear of God, is the beginning of wisdom." The man who fears God will reverence his authority. If you acknowledge this, you will have respect for his law, which is "holy, and just, and good." This law is the "schoolmaster" that brings you to Christ, the Great Captain of our Salvation!

And now, my friend, "let us reason together." If you are not already a Christian soldier, let me kindly

ask you a question. Are you ready to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ?

Suppose you fall in battle, or die in camp, have you any assurance that heaven will be your home? Have you given your heart to him who has died to save you? Don't deceive yourself. If you do not *love* Jesus, you cannot be happy where he is! Heaven is no place for profane, ungodly men. They could not be happy there. The atmosphere is holy—the inhabitants are holy—all is holy in heaven! What are your habits and feelings now? If you are intemperate, or profane, or licentious, and have no pleasure in the company of good men on earth, how, think you, could you be happy in heaven? This is a solemn question, my friend, and a momentous one to you, if you are not a Christian soldier. Your soul is very precious—it is immortal! *You* have the care of it. Don't, my friend, throw it away. Ask God to help you to repent, and come to Jesus. He will "wash you from your sins in His own blood." He will give you a new heart—a heart to love him—a holy heart—a brave heart—and then heaven will be to you a home, an everlasting home! Then you will have a courage that knows no flinching, a victory that can never know defeat. Will you not be a Christian soldier? Try! God will help you. Put away your sins. Stand up like a man in the dignity of your nature; and remember, that "he that ruleth his own spirit, is better than he that taketh a city." God's people are praying for you—it may be, God's spirit is now striving with you? Don't resist him! Don't despise this importunity of your

FRIEND.

EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS.

Col. Gardiner was as well known for his love of country and for valor, tested in many a battle-field, as he was for piety. He was as brave and skilful in defending virtue against vice, and the truth of God against infidelity, as he was in leading his men into the thickest of the fight. During his earlier years, he often expressed a wish that it might be God's will for him to sacrifice his life in defence of religion and of the liberties of his country. This prayer was answered. The last record we have of him, written by himself, is in the following terms: "The enemy are advancing; but I trust in the Almighty God, who doeth whatsoever he pleases in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. I have one life to sacrifice to my country's safety, and I shall not spare it." This was only the day before he fell beneath the blow of a broadsword in the battle of Preston Pans. The sublimest part of his life, however, was his example of godliness amid the profaneness and dissipation of the camp.

Of Capt. Vicars we have also spoken, and while we do not think his memoirs just the kind of record that might do the most good, we do greatly admire the man as a Christian soldier. His lofty courage, self-denial, and diligence in doing good are ever to be remembered. He found time to pray and read the Bible, to visit the sick, attend meetings for prayer, and to cheer up his men amid the hardships and labors and perils of the

camp as well as of the battle. We find him writing thus to his sister: "Be assured you will feel far happier in this world, even, by making religion your chief pursuit and study, than by all the pleasures and gaieties which your young heart may now be longing after. I tell you candidly and seriously, that I would willingly part with every earthly pleasure *for life*, for one hour's communion with Jesus every day!" And again: "Oh, that the Lord God would come among us with a high hand and with a stretched out arm; that he would, by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, change and soften the hard hearts of those who despise the riches of his grace, and who make a mock of sin while standing on the verge of eternity; that he would plant the rose of Sharon in all its freshness and fulness in the ground of every troubled, sin-laden heart." Such was the heart of the man, who gave his own blankets to his soldiers, and slept on leaves, and, like Jacob, had a stone for his pillow. Such was the Christian soldier, who roused his little band of two hundred in the dead of night to meet the attack of two thousand Russians in the trenches, by shouting: "Now, 97th, up and charge!" He himself led the way, and when a wound drew the blood copiously from his breast, his voice rose higher still, as he cried: "Men of the 97th, follow me!" as he leaped the parapet and charged the enemy. For a moment the moonbeams fell on his flashing sword as he waved it for the last time and gave his dying cheer to his men: "This way, 97th!" And he fell amidst his foes, but fell in the arms of victory.

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No. 241.

JOHN'S BAPTISM NOT CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

BY C. C. GOULD.

DEAR Reader, you have doubtless met with a sect of Christians, who claim to be *The Church*, and the only Church. They say that Jesus Christ received baptism, by immersion, at the hands of John, the founder of the *only true Church*, and therefore no one can be a member of the church or enjoy its privileges, without being immersed by them. As error in such important matters is always dangerous, let us prayerfully and candidly ask ourselves, "Are these things so?" That we may dispose of one thing at a time, let us direct our inquiries first to the baptism of John; was it, as they claim, Christian baptism?

All denominations agree that baptism must be performed, as our Saviour directs, in the name of the Holy Trinity, that is, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" and otherwise it cannot be Christian baptism. This then is an infallible test: did John baptize in the name of the Holy Trinity? All sects agree too, that if John's was Christian baptism, those, who had received it, would not be baptized on their reception into the church, by Christ and his apostles. This then is a second test: did the apostles receive any of the converts baptized by John, into the church, and did they rebaptize them?

In Acts from xviii. 24, to xix. 5, we read in substance as follows; Apollos, "knowing only the baptism of John," preaches it, makes converts to it, and baptizes them with

it. He then leaves Ephesus, where these converts were, and Paul, finding them, "says unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They reply, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." What! baptized with John's baptism, and yet "had not so much as heard of the Holy Ghost!" Then John *did not* baptize in the name of the Holy Ghost, and in the last two verses of this reference, Paul tells them, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him, who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." What! *in the Saviour's name!* Then John *did not* baptize in the name of the Son. Thus, by our first and universally admitted test, we are driven unavoidably to the conclusion, that John's *was not* Christian baptism, since it was not performed in the name either of the Son or of the Holy Ghost, the second and third persons in the Holy Trinity. Observe too that these converts were rebaptized by the apostles: hence, by our second test, we are forced to conclude that John's *was not* Christian baptism. Get your Bible, I beg you, and carefully examine all these references for yourself.

What then was it? All evangelical denominations agree that the Scriptures acknowledge but two dispensations, the Jewish and the Christian. They also agree that if any divinely inspired act was not done under one of these, it was done under the other: this is an undisputed test.

We see that previous to our Saviour's death, he had little to do with the Gentiles, and called them dogs, while he called the Jews children, Mark vii. 24–30. And when he sent out his disciples to preach and work miracles, he commanded them, "Go not into the way of the Gen-

tiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Not only so, but in the same place he commands them to say, "The kingdom of heaven (not has come, but) is at hand." Since he continued this course of conduct up to the hour of his death, we are forced to conclude that the Christian dispensation had not yet begun. But after our Saviour had risen from the dead, and was about to ascend to heaven, we find him for the first time commanding his disciples, "Go ye therefore and teach *all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. xxviii. 19. He also directed them to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Ghost before they entered on this work. Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4–8. And we see this fulfilled in Acts ii. 1–4. From these facts the conclusion is unavoidable that the Christian dispensation began on the day of Pentecost, and that everything done previous to that day was done under the Jewish dispensation. Yes; before this, as the Saviour tells us plainly, he himself had no authority but to the Jews, Matt. xv. 24; and Paul says he was a minister of the circumcision, Romans xv. 8. But John, who was sent to usher in the Messiah, had fulfilled his commission and was dead long before the day of Pentecost: therefore, by our test, John's baptism was not under the Christian, and so must have been under the Jewish dispensation; and consequently was a Jewish ordinance. Well then, the mode, whatever it may have been, of administering a Jewish, can have but little to do with the mode of a Christian ordinance: hence it is of little importance how John baptized. Observe too that since it was in every respect a Jewish ordinance, all, who build their faith and practice on John's baptism, are, thus far, Jews and not Christians.

Let us now, in the second place, inquire what was the relation of our Saviour to John's baptism? We have seen

that John's baptism was under, and formed a part of, the Jewish dispensation; therefore he was a Jew. Our Saviour was born of Jewish parents, Matt. i. 2–16; circumcised the eighth day, Luke ii. 21; a minister of the circumcision, Romans xv. 8; he came not to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfil, Matt. v. 17; therefore he also was a Jew. Well then, we have John, a Jew, administering a Jewish ordinance to Christ, another Jew. Such is the ordinance, to which they would compel us to submit, or debar us from the privileges of what they claim to be, the *only true Christian Church.* A reasonable requirement, indeed!

John's was "the baptism of repentance," Acts xix. 4. But the spotless Lamb of God had no sin, of which to repent; therefore it could not have been applied to him "unto repentance," Matt. iii. 11. How then did it apply? He was a prophet divinely inspired as all prophets were. Since he was Creator and Proprietor of the universe, he was already King. But since he was also to execute the office of a Priest under the law, he must be legally qualified. The law prescribes a definite mode of ordination for its priests, and recognizes none, who do not strictly conform to this mode: therefore our Saviour must be ordained to his priesthood. Well then, five things are necessary; first, ordination to an office must take place at or before entering upon the duties of that office; second, the character and duties of an office must be pointed out, when one is ordained to it; third, the authority for such ordination must be shown; fourth, in the case of a priest, there must be an external purification with water, Ex. xl. 31; fifth, for a priest, there must be an anointing with oil to signify enduing with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Ex. xxx. 30. We read of only one public act performed by our Saviour, (questioning with the doctors in the temple,) before his baptism by John, and all agree that he began his public ministry immediately after

wards; then the first requisite is fulfilled. The nature and duties of our Saviour's office were clearly pointed out at that time, and thus the second is fulfilled, John i. 15–19. The authority was given as required by the third, John i. 29–34. The fourth was fulfilled and so was the fifth; yes, doubly fulfilled, for after his baptism, the Holy Spirit, the thing signified by the oil, came down upon him in its stead, Matt. iii. 16. What then did John do to the Saviour? It is *impossible* to come to any other conclusion than that *he ordained him.* And indeed, when he uses his legal authority in driving the buyers and sellers with the money changers out of the temple, the priests, scribes, and elders demand his authority for so doing, and he merely refers them to John's baptism. Mark xi. 15, and 27–30. All attempts to show any other ordination, have been utterly vain; and it cannot be supposed that he, who "came to fulfil the law" would violate it in his most important office. Well then, this was our Saviour's ordination to his priestly office; and therefore, if it had been under the Christian instead of the Jewish dispensation, and if they could have proved that he undoubtedly went under the water, we still should have been under no more obligations to follow him under the water, than we are to die on the cross for a fallen world. But the facts are directly the reverse. Well then, we are bound to conclude that the mode of applying the water in the ordination of our Saviour to the Jewish priesthood *can have nothing* to do with the mode of Christian Baptism.

Here the question very naturally arises, What right had John to ordain a priest? We find that a person under the law might receive ordination in either of two ways. The first and more usual of these, was through the existing priesthood: the second was from a prophet directly inspired. In the latter, Moses was inspired to ordain Aaron and his sons, Ex. xxviii. 1; and Samuel to

anoint Saul. 1 Sam. xix. 16. This was the right by which John ordained our Saviour. John i. 33 and 34: also Luke vii. 26–28.

But, says one, I am still curious to know how the water was applied to our Saviour. Christ "came to fulfil the law," and said that it became him "to fulfil all righteousness," Matt. iii. 16, and no one has any right to suppose that as "a faithful son" he would violate the law of his Father's house in letter, mode, or spirit: hence, if we can find out in what way the water was applied to Aaron and his sons, in their ordination, we shall know how it was applied to him. Aaron and his sons were washed at the laver at the door of the tabernacle. Ex. xxix. 4, and xxx. 18–21.

From the same passage we see that this laver was merely a wash-bowl, for the priests to wash their hands and feet at. It was cast from brass, and must have been small, or it would have been so heavy as to require special provision for its transportation. Even with its foot, it is too light to require any such appropriation, and therefore we see no mention of it among the teams or other conveyances for all the heavy furniture. Hence we may safely conclude that its size was inconsiderable, far too small to immerse a man in. Then Aaron and his sons were not immersed; therefore there is every reason to believe that our Saviour was not. It is highly probable that in washing they put their feet into the laver's foot, which also contained water: hence the Saviour steps down into the water. It does not follow that, because the Saviour and the Eunuch "went down into and came up out of the water," they went under it: for if it did, John and Philip must have gone under too, since they "went down into and came up out of" just as the others. But in a warm climate, where shoes are not worn, any one would most naturally step down into the water's

edge, when about to have it applied or to apply it in any way, as we see them do in these cases.

Now let us briefly sum up our conclusions.

1. John's was not Christian baptism, because not in the name of the Holy Trinity.

2. It was not Christian, because its subjects were re-baptized by the Apostles.

3. It was a Jewish ordinance, because under and forming a part of the Jewish dispensation: therefore its mode can have little or nothing to do with any Christian ordinance.

4. As applied to our Saviour, it was the ordination of a priest under the Jewish law, and hence cannot have the slightest bearing upon Christian baptism.

5. And if it had any bearing, we have every reason to believe that Aaron was not immersed, and therefore that Christ was not.

6. John had prophetic authority to ordain Him, who was "a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

EXTRACT FROM SCOTT'S COMMENTARY ON MATT. iii. 5, 6.

WE cannot suppose, that John baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, or that Jesus was thus baptized; nay, the contrary is manifest: and probably Christ's disciples did not use that peculiar form of Christian baptism till after the ascension of their Lord. It is also evident, that some *at least*, who had received John's baptism, received Christian baptism also, when admitted into the church of Christ: for it cannot be supposed, but that several of the multitude, who heard Peter on the day of Pentecost, had been John's disciples; yet he exhorted them all to be baptized in the name of

Jesus, and the three thousand who gladly received the word were thus baptized.

John's baptism and Christian baptism, therefore, were not exactly the same; and inferences from the one respecting the other are inconclusive. It does not appear, that any but adults were baptized by John, for circumcision still continued in force, as the initiatory ordinance and seal of the covenant; and therefore we never read that he baptized households, as the apostles did. Adult Jews, professing repentance and a disposition to become the Messiah's subjects, were the only persons whom John admitted to baptism. Water was the outward sign, but whether the rite was administered by immersion or not, is incapable of decisive proof. The use of water is essential, because that is the universal purifier; the quantity and mode of application seem to be merely circumstances, varying as occasion may require. The inward and spiritual signification is exactly the same as that of circumcision, which is spoken of as the "circumcision of the heart," that is, *regeneration* and *sanctification*, by the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit: and the Jews were taught, by John's use of baptism, that their outward advantages would never qualify them to enjoy the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, except their hearts were washed from the love and pollution of sin; since they were by nature polluted, born in sin, and "the children of wrath," even as the Gentiles were.

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No. 242.

WHY I LOVE MY CHURCH.

By the Rev. J. H. Bocock, Georgetown, D. C.

My church is the old Presbyterian church; rich, through all ages of her history, in divine learning, and in human learning, in deep thought, and in deep faith. She is my church; and with fervent charity, and kind good will towards all other friends of our common Lord, and to the churches into which they are gathered, I confess that I deeply and truly love my own church. I will explain why. If my reasons are good and true, they may awaken the same sacred attachment in other hearts—perhaps in your own, dear reader.

I. I love my church because she honours the Lord Jesus Christ as a divine Saviour; loves, adores, and enthrones him in her heart, as the "only Redeemer of God's elect;" receives him in all his offices as Prophet, Priest, and King; believes in him supremely as the Mediator of the covenant of grace; and owns and acknowledges him, and him only, as the Head of the Church on earth and in heaven.

II. I love my church because, with all her imperfections, such as may cling to the best of earthly things, still, the piety which is in her is true godliness; it humbles, and warms, and cheers the believer's heart; and is produced to quite as great a degree as that in any other church, by the simple action of the divine word on the human heart.

III. I love my church because she owns and calmly

maintains, among men, the great and glorious doctrines of grace which are taught so clearly in God's word:—see Ephes. i.—Romans viii. ix.—1 Peter i.—which human pride, and the carnal heart so much oppose, though they are so clearly laid down in Scripture, and are so precious to the humble, teachable, and renewed heart.

IV. I love my church because she holds the great doctrines of grace in such manner as that "thereby neither is God represented as the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established;" *Confession of Faith, Chap.* 3, *Sec.* 1; thus maintaining both parts of the revealed truth on this great subject, without undertaking to explain all the difficulties which may grow out of them; but believing and maintaining them with loyal and faithful heart on the authority of the word of God.

V. I love my church because she owns the necessity of a pure, holy, godly life, not conformed to this world. Her ordinary history bears the record, which will be so precious in the light of eternity, that she is willing to sacrifice none of the faithful strictness of the divine word, in order, thereby, to purchase or procure the friendship and support of the sensual, the worldly, the unregenerate, and the unspiritual.

VI. I love my church because she teaches and maintains that the regeneration and renewal of the human heart is effected by the power of the Holy Spirit of God alone, and not by baptism, or any other religious ceremony, human or divine.

VII. I love my church because the prayers which

she offers, are expressions of her present, living desires, adorations, thanks, wants, and requests; as unquestionably the prayers of our Lord, and of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles were; and because she is not bound to take the language of former generations and other ages of mere men, as the sole language of her present worship; but her worship, like her religion, is an incessant living development and utterance of the power of the Divine Spirit in the hearts of her children.

VIII. I love my church because, with all the defects and imperfections of her ministers, who are, as others are, but men, yet she has and has ever had, both a godly and an educated ministry; and has never had, and will not suffer, either a ministry of cold, dead, and worldly learning without godliness; nor a ministry in which piety is connected with ignorance and superstition.

IX. I love my church because she has erected the whole edifice of her most holy and precious faith upon the word of God, and no part of it upon the doctrines or commandments of men. *See Confession of Faith—Form of Government—Chapter* 1. *Section* 1.

X. I love my church because she maintains the principles of true catholicity, as laid down by Paul in the fourteenth chapter of the Romans; not denying the baptism of her sister churches, or the orders of their ministry, because their baptism, or their orders are performed according to their own consciences and not hers.

XI. I love my church because her baptism is by pouring or sprinkling, as it appears that our Saviour's

was; as best shows, by type, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit; as was the baptism of the three thousand at Pentecost; of the Apostle Paul; and the Philippian jailer, and probably others: Luke iii. 21; Acts ii. 41, ix. 18, xvi. 33: and because she maintains with special faithfulness the baptism of the Holy Spirit of God, as the thing exhibited by baptism with water: and makes covenant with God for her children.

XII. I love my church because she steadfastly maintains, and has ever maintained, the pure institutions of the Holy Scriptures, and of the church of Christ in its purest and most uncorrupt ages, that ministers of the gospel should be appointed and ordained to their office by the teaching Elders or Presbyters of the church: as the Apostle Paul was ordained by the teachers at Antioch, Acts xiii. 1;—and as Timothy was ordained "by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," 1 Tim. iv. 14. And for which government to be perpetuated, a preparation was made by the apostles and their fellow labourers, when they "ordained Elders or Presbyters in every city:" See Titus i. 15.

XIII. I love my church because she is a truly and thoroughly reformed church, on the model of the holy Scriptures, with no likeness, kindred, or tendency towards the great Antichristian apostasy.

XIV. I love my church because she obeys the Scriptures, in letting no man judge her on the subject of "meats and drinks and holy days," and "ordinances after the commandments and doctrines of men." Col. ii.

XV. I love my church because, in all her history,

she is identified with constitutional liberty, the government of law, and the rights and the duties of man; and has ever been the leader in the great cause of legal liberty in church and state.

XVI. I love my church because she is ordinarily above the littleness of proselytism; and after her zealous advocacy of the truth as she apprehends it, she leaves men to form their church-connections according to their own consciences, in view of that truth.

XVII. I love my church because she is not, and has never been, indifferent to the distinction between truth and error, on any important subject; and because she is as free as it often falls to the lot of earthly things to be, from impurity, from schism, from heresy, from any exclusive assumption, or from the spiritual death of mere form and ceremony.

XVIII. I love my church because she steadfastly believes in, earnestly prays for, and frequently, through the grace of God, richly enjoys, powerful revivals of religion; walking in a happy middle path between wild and dangerous animal excitements on the one hand, and the frozen and dead forms of Pharisaism on the other hand. Thank God for that happy middle way, in which our hearts may be warmed with living fire from God above, and made to glow with the mighty power of the spiritual life, and yet we may diligently preserve the good order and the deep solemnity befitting the house of the Lord.

XIX. I love my church for her solemn and earnest prayers; for her grave and decent good order; for her rich, cheering, and godly psalms and hymns of praise; and for the precious gospel of Christ,

which, with jealous faithfulness, and without corrupt admixtures, she guards, defends, and preaches to the people.

XX. I love my church because she is an elective Republic—holding the official equality of her ministers, according to the words of the Lord Jesus, "One is your master even Christ, and all ye are brethren"—without the power of a religious monarch on the one hand, and without the uncertain caprice of an unchecked majority on the other hand: but with gradation of courts and due rights of appeal.

XXI. I love my church because those found around her standards, are, in general, people of at least as sober judgments, as candid and peaceable spirits, as thinking, inquiring, investigating minds, as others, and reflect in society, so far as their influence goes, fully as much of the light of revealed truth as others.

XXII. I love my church because she is so peculiarly apt to be disliked by the gay infidel, the licentious and ribald sensualist, the ungodly worldling, the dark and dangerous fanatic, and the cold and blank atheist and pantheist.

XXIII. I love my church because her doctrines and her discipline are as old as the holy Scriptures; they were in the hearts and lives of many of God's hidden ones in the ages, when the church was in the wilderness; and when religion had its great revival at the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, these doctrines and this discipline arose from the word of God, where, according to our humble faith, they had ever been.

XXIV. I love my church because, with little or

nothing to attract the world, save the precious gospel of Christ, she has yet been attended by the mighty power of the Spirit of God, during the past twenty years, so as to have doubled the number of her members; having advanced from the one hundred and forty thousand communicants which she had at that time, to the two hundred and eighty thousand members which she has at the present time (1860.)

XXV. I love my church because I can so truly and faithfully love her, in accordance with the foregoing devout profession, and in strict accordance with her own principles, and yet preserve the unity of the Spirit, the bond of peace, fervent charity, and communion in their gifts, graces, and sacraments, with all that in every place call with true faith upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.

XXVI. I love my church because she heartily accepts the Redeemer's great parting commandment: Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; because she is, and has been, among the foremost of the tribes of his people, in seeking to spread among men every where, the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; and because she is blessed with the possession of as complete an equipment, perhaps with a more complete equipment, for the missionary work of the bright coming ages, than most other churches. She is thoroughly equipped with Schools, Colleges, and Theological Seminaries for the training of her sons and daughters for his service. She is thoroughly equipped with her Missionary, Education, Publication, and Church Extension Agencies, for the

actual execution of the Missionary work. And she is thoroughly equipped with her Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assembly, to administer the government of the Church on earth, under her great Head in heaven; and to maintain right, liberty, and purity; as she has ever been blessed with the divine grace to incline and enable her to do.

XXVII. I love my church because she is a branch of the Holy Catholic Church in the purest and truest sense of the words. Her members are grafted into the body of Christ, not merely by the appointed ceremony which is the sign and seal of engrafting, but is utterly vain and empty when alone; but also by the Holy Spirit of God, who alone can bestow on any soul, real communion in the true Catholic Church. And I love her because that true Holy Catholic Church of which she is a branch, is distinguished from the world by the work of the Spirit upon the hearts of men, and not by genealogies and successions of men without the Spirit of God. And I love her because proof is constantly accumulating everywhere, in the providence of God, that her consistent members meet with abundant acceptance and salvation from the Lord.

Presbyterian Board of Publication, No. 821 Chestnut St.

No. 243.

THE INVALID.

THE condition of the invalid is, at some time or other in life, that of a large portion of our race. Sickness oftentimes seizes upon the frame work, even long before we are called to meet the last great enemy, and it cannot be expected that you or I should be exempted from the results of our fallen humanity. Your position is in many respects favourable to religious meditation, and I beg you to listen, as for the welfare of your soul, to a few suggestions from one who has learned sympathy by experience, and whose occupation has often associated him with the ailing.

By your present condition you are forcibly reminded of the uncertainty of your life.

The words of the poet are too true that, "All men think all men mortal but themselves." Although death ever and anon visits our neighbours and friends, and bears away dear ones from our side, yet it never seems so near as when we ourselves are sick. Even when there is reason to hope and expect recovery, we cannot fail to see the seeds of disease germinating, and to read plainly the evidences of our frailty. Oh, how uncertain are the things of this world! How quickly a little sickness brings us low! are expressions often on the lips of the invalid. How unwise, then, to provide only for this world, fleeting and transitory as it is! Who can be or ought to be satisfied with a hope which has no anchor, with a joy of no endurance, with a life

of no certainty; when an anchor sure and steadfast, a joy without an element of sadness, and a life full, free, and eternal, are attainable?

I know not what may be the issue of your present ailment, whether life or death, but I do know that it is well for you now to care for your soul. If, as I trust, you may be restored to health, you will have less excuse than ever before for your enmity against God. The present is always a better time to seek Christ than you have any right to promise yourself in the future; and God does not accept the agreement of a sick man to become a Christian when he recovers. It is proverbial that such resolutions are soon forgotten, for the terms of the Gospel are not prospective repentance. He now waiteth to be gracious, and it is due to yourself, your Maker, and the world, that when you enter again upon the duties of active life, it shall be with earnest zeal, and devotion in the Master's service.

If restoration is impossible, the interests of your immortal soul for eternity are in more immediate jeopardy, pending between happiness everlasting, and misery unutterable; and the choice rests with you. In any event, reason and conscience enjoin upon you now to lay hold upon eternal life. To you delay is fearfully, awfully dangerous.

You are now being forcibly taught your dependence upon a power beyond self. The truest independence of man is that built upon a full sense of dependence upon God. How little can we do for ourselves! How weak is all man's boasted power! How may a trivial accident or failure of health bring all our cherished

plans to nought! Is there anything which our own hands have wrought worth setting our affections upon? Do we not need a more lasting reliance than self? From the stand point of ill health, how does all that which we call very important in wordly business dwindle into comparative insignificance! Then pride is ashamed of itself, and the lesson of humility is taught amid felt weakness. To whom shall we go for lasting comfort, save to Him who alone has the words of eternal life?

You now have leisure to contemplate your eternal interests. Health and prosperity ought to be more favourable periods for seeking salvation, but you are not sure of these; and beside the sad testimony of the world's experience is, that when the body and the estate prosper, the soul is most likely to be neglected. Necessity now causes you to pause from the distractions and strife of earthly engagements, and suggests questions which, at your peril, you must answer now, or meet them unanswered and unanswerable at the judgment. Why need you in this hour be longer deceived by the false hopes of the world? Riches, and honour, and the syren voice of pleasure are stripped of their allurements; they now furnish not even a hiding place for the soul; there is a gloom about the sick man's future which these cannot conceal. But amid the blackness of the darkness, religion can shine out a constellation of light, irradiating the chamber of sickness with the light, and life, and consolation of a spiritual reliance. Have you this light? Have you made ready for the other world? The body is ill—your soul, is it well? Is it safe? Have you been to

the great Physician, and from his hand received the balm of healing? Is your heart right in the sight of God? Have you earnestly made the simple yet sublime prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner?" If not, strive, I beseech you, at once to improve your present condition to your soul's advantage. Pray to God for his Spirit; read his holy word, and use all the means of grace which your condition will allow. Seek to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and your own infinite guilt, and the infinite merit, and love, and willingness to save of that Saviour who is ever able and ready to forgive.

If you are troubled with doubts and fears, keep imploring God's direction, and ask assistance from some experienced Christian friend. Be not ashamed to seek the pearl of great price. Accept Christ as your Saviour, salvation as your portion, and heaven as your hope. Religion is as good to live by as to die by, and therefore choose the better part, not merely from the fear of death, but from the love of true life, as one resolving, living or dying, from this time forward to be the Lord's. God the Father will welcome the returning invalid, God the Son will redeem him from destruction, and the Holy Spirit as the blessed Comforter will speak peace to the soul.

You should at this time repent, because you need now the consolations of religion. When the wellsprings of earthly pleasure are dried up, where else can we go except to the fountain of endless peace? Now all earthly things are unsatisfactory and unsatisfying; and though for a little time they may cheer the heart, and break the monotony of sadness, still

they leave a vacancy, which the fulness of that blessing, which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow thereto, alone can fill. A miserable comforter to the invalid is the world, but there is true consolation in Christ Jesus.

He who has repented and believed; who can say, Thy will be done; who feels submissive in the hands of Him who doeth all things well, and who knoweth better than himself what is best, has a river of comfort, pure as the river of the water of life, which flows beside the throne of God and of the Lamb. The invalid without religion may go on recklessly, like the horse rushing to the battle, and hardened by the drum-beat of fearful risk; or carelessly like a thoughtless wanderer amid slippery paths, and fearful brinks; or like the stoic, cold, and unmoved amid unmistakable ruin; but this does not change his fate; and only the man with a firm, religious belief can be joyful amid trial, and happy amid seeming sources of gloom. Such a comfort is worth seeking and having. I have been sick, but oh! I would not be sick again without a hope in Christ for all that worlds can buy. This trust is not earth-born, and although on account of his sins the Christian may for a while fall into darkness, faith will soon dispel the gloom, and the terror and sting of sickness and death be overcome. It is worth your while even for present comfort to obtain this consolation, and how much more in view of its eternal results!

Religion, and it alone, can make sickness a blessing. How many have had reason to bless God for their sick days, more than for all their well ones! God's

messengers of mercy often come to us clad in the garb of sorrow, and saints even on earth have often found occasion to rejoice in tribulation. Job in all his trials held firm his trust in God, and the trial of his faith wrought patience. The Psalmist could devoutly say in reference to all his sorrows, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." The excellent Baxter wrote his Saint's Rest at the age of thirty-five, in prospect of approaching dissolution, but for over thirty-five years more God made his own reflections comforts to his pilgrimage. Payson, amid the conflicts of diseases, experienced sweet foretastes of heaven; and Hall, and Heber, and White, and a host of other saints now in glory, have realized their bodily diseases as a sanctified means of perfecting and exalting their religious experience. It is the hand of the Lord that touches us; not the hand of man that may deal unjustly, nor the hand of evil spirits which may afflict maliciously, but the Lord, that chastens in love, as does the father the child; that tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and at last folds him in his arms.

Oh, thou invalid, it is God that speaketh to thee by this affliction, and if any now hear his voice, he has promised to know him, and to come unto him. Listen to the timely admonition, and seek to obtain that peace in believing which comforts the body, and saves the soul.

Trust in God often relieves even physical ailment. Composure of mind is favourable to recovery; and how else can true composure be secured, such as may be derived from a heavenly reliance? The Christian, while properly anxious to leave no means untried to

preserve life, can commit his ways unto the Lord, and thus be relieved from undue anxiety. Besides, God is the hearer and answerer of prayers, especially of those which we earnestly offer for our own salvation. And as he raised Hezekiah from the bed of sickness, and has directly told us that the prayer of faith can save the sick, as well as deliver him from his sins, we love the assurance that he who has formed us does turn away the arrow of the destroyer, and often grants that salvation which has the promise both of the life which now is, and of that which is to come. Often the best prospect even for this world, is in listening to the voice of the Spirit, and beseeching God to withhold his hand and prolong our days.

But all arguments having reference to present comfort are as nothing compared with that one argument, —Eternity. Life is at best but a question of time with us all, and pointedly so to the invalid; and the most solemn of all thoughts is that the soul will not die, but live to enjoy or suffer. If you dislike bodily affliction, secure, I beseech you, deliverance from the infinite pangs of a lost soul, of which these are but as the faintest semblance.

God has made you pause in your pathway, that you may consider and secure life's true end. His word, his promises, his invitations, his threatenings, and this visitation of his providence are addressed to you, and blessed are your eyes if they see his love for you, and your ears if they hear the gracious words of eternal life. Repent and believe now, lest if you wait for the more convenient season of health, the cares of this world will again choke the word, or death, sooner or

later, prove to be to you Satan's messenger to bear you away to the pit of eternal illness and unmitigated pain.

THE INVALID'S HYMN.

I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.—Ps. cxix. 75.

LORD, by thine hand withdrawn apart
From earthly things and outward scenes;
What lessons wouldst thou teach my heart?
What barrier break that intervenes?

Perchance to man my life has seemed
Blameless, defiled by no dark blot;
But blameless can that life be deemed
In which my God has been forgot?

Is it thy wanderer to reclaim
That thou contendest now with me?
Have I not missed life's noblest aim,
As yet not having lived for thee?

How have my powers been misapplied!
How has a creature born to die,
Been borne along the impetuous tide
Of worldly care and vanity!

Truths heard of by the outward ear,
I now discern, at least in part;
"A still small voice" I seem to hear,
Speaking in mercy to my heart.

I boast of innocence no more;
Guilty, yea guilty, Lord, I plead;
My merits, trusted in before,
Now fail me as a broken reed.

Blest is the man thou chastenest, Lord,
Thus speaks the oracle Divine;
Now on my heart let grace be poured,
And may that blessedness be mine.

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THE TRINITY IN UNITY.

If there be any diversity of nature, or any essential subordination in the persons of the Godhead, it must be revealed to us either in their names, or their attributes, or their acts; for it is by these only that they are, or can possibly be made known to us in this life. If the Scripture has made no difference in any of these, farther than that of a personal distinction, (which we all allow,) we are no longer to doubt that there is a natural or essential Unity in the three persons of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. The design of the following pages is to show that these Persons have the same titles, the same attributes, the same counsel or will, and all concur in the same divine acts: so that what the Scripture is falsely supposed to have ascribed to God in one Person, will appear to be ascribed by the same authority to God in three persons. It appears, therefore, that these three persons are but one God; they are three distinct agents, yet there is but one and the same Divine agency; or, as it has been more fully and better expressed, that "that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we are to believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality."

I.

The Trinity in Unity is the one Lord, the Creator of the world.

Psal. xxxiii. 6. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath (Heb. Spirit) of his mouth. The whole Trinity therefore created the world: yet this Trinity is but one Lord.

II.

The Trinity in Unity is the one Supreme Being or Nature, distinguished from all other beings by the name Jehovah. For the Scripture gives us the following position:

Deut. vi. 4. The Lord our God is one Jehovah: and again, Psal. lxxxiii. 18. Thou whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth.

Yet Christ is Jehovah.

Jer. xxii. 6. This is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness.

So is the Spirit also.

Ezek. viii. 1, 3. The Lord Jehovah put forth the form of an hand and took me,—and the Spirit lifted me, &c.

Therefore, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are the one Jehovah: they are three persons, yet have but one name and one nature. And it is the great advantage of this argument, that the name Jehovah is not capable of any such equivocal interpretations as that of God; it has no plural; is incommunicable to any derived or created being: and is peculiar to the Divine nature, because it is descriptive of it.

III.

The Trinity in Unity is the Lord, absolutely so called; in Hebrew, אדני; in Greek, ὁ *Κύριος*.

Rom. x. 12. The same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him.

Luke ii. 11. A Saviour which is Christ the Lord.

Rom. xi. 34. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? Which *Lord*, as we learn from the prophet whence this is quoted, is the Spirit; for it is written, Isa. xl. 13. Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? That the person of the Spirit is the Lord, is also plain from 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. Now the Lord is that Spirit—We are changed from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord; (Greek: As by the Lord the Spirit:) which is all along to be understood of the personal Spirit, because the Apostle begins expressly with that at the third verse of this chapter. And it was from the authority of these words, The Lord is the Spirit, added to those of verse six, The Spirit giveth life, that the council of Nice borrowed the following clause of its creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life."

IV.

The Trinity in Unity is the God of Israel.

Matth. xv. 31. The multitude glorified the God of Israel.

Luke i. 16, 17. The children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God: and he shall go before him—that is, before Christ.

2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3. The Spirit of the Lord spake by me: The God of Israel said, &c. So that unless he who spake was one being, and he that said was another, the Spirit is the God of Israel.

V.

The Divine Law, and consequently the authority whereupon it is founded, is that of a Trinity in Unity.

Rom. vii. 25. I myself serve the Law of God.

Gal. vi. 2. Fulfil the Law of Christ.

Rom. viii. 2. The Law of the Spirit of Life.

The Divine Law then, is the law of God, Christ, and the Spirit of life. But it is written, James iv. 12. There is one Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy: therefore these three are one. And here we have the true reason why the Scripture has represented the whole Trinity as tempted and resisted by the disobedience of man. For sin being the transgression of the law, and the law being derived from the undivided authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, every breach of it is an offence against the Trinity: therefore it is written,

Deut. vi. 16. Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God.

1 Cor. x. 9.———neither let us tempt Christ.

Acts v. 9. How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?

VI.

The mind and will of God is the mind and will of a Trinity in Unity.

The mind of God.

1 Cor. ii. 16. Who hath known the mind of the Lord?
———— We have the mind of Christ.

Rom. viii. 27. He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit.

The will of God.

1 Thess. iv. 3. This is the Will of God.

Acts xxii. 14. The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his Will. *

2 Pet. i. 21. Prophecy came not in old time by the Will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

VII.

The Power of God is the Power of a Trinity in Unity.

Eph. iii. 7.—The grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his Power.

2 Cor. xii. 9.—that the Power of Christ may rest upon me.

Rom. xv. 19.—signs and wonders by the Power of the Spirit of God.

The Scripture therefore has ascribed Divine power, and that in the same exercise of it, (the ministry and miracles of Paul,) to Christ and the Spirit in common with God the Father. So that when all glory and power is ascribed to the only wise God, what God can that be, but the Trinity? Upon this principle the Scripture is easily reconciled: upon any other it is unintelligible.

VIII.

The Trinity in Unity is Eternal.

Rom. xvi. 25, 26. The mystery—made manifest ac-

* This passage is meant of Christ and of his will. The God of our Fathers (said Ananias) hath chosen thee, &c., but the person in God who appeared to Ananias and said of Saul, He is a chosen vessel unto Me, was the Lord, even Jesus, Acts ix. 15. 17.

cording to the commandment (*αἰωνίου*) of the Everlasting God.

Rev. xxii. 13. I (Jesus) am the First and the Last.

Heb. ix. 14.—who through (*αἰωνίου*) the Everlasting Spirit.

IX.

The Trinity in Unity is True.

John vii. 28. He that sent me is True.

Rev. iii. 7. These things saith he—that is True, he that hath the key of David, &c.

1 John v. 6. It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is Truth—*ἡ ἀλήθεια*, the truth.

X.

The Trinity in Unity is Holy.

Rev. xv. 4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for Thou only art Holy.

Acts iii. 14. But ye denied the Holy One, and desired a murderer to be released unto you, &c. See also Dan. ix. 24. and Rev. iii. 7.

1 John ii. 20. Ye have an unction from the Holy One; that is, an anointing from the Holy Ghost, who is called, in

John xiv. 26. (*Το πνεῦμα το ἅγιον,*) The Spirit, the Holy One.

XI.

The Trinity in Unity is Omnipresent.

Jer. xxiii. 24. Do not I Fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?

Eph. i. 22.——the Fulness of Him (Christ) that filleth all in all.

Psal. cxxxix. 7, 8. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there.

XII.

The Trinity in Unity is the fountain of Life.

Deut. xxx. 20.——love the Lord thy God, for he is thy Life.

Col. iii. 4. When Christ who is our Life shall appear, &c.

Rom. viii. 10. The Spirit is Life.

XIII.

The Trinity in Unity made all mankind.

Psal. c. 3. The Lord he is God, it is he that hath Made us.

John i. 3. By him (Christ) were all things Made.

Job xxxiii. 4. The Spirit of God hath Made me.

XIV.

The Trinity in Unity quicken the dead.

John v. 21. The Father raiseth up the dead and Quickeneth them.

———— even so the Son Quickeneth whom he will.

John vi. 63. It is the Spirit that Quickeneth.

XV.

The Trinity in Unity instruct us in Divine knowledge.

John vi. 45. They shall be all Taught of God.

Gal. i. 12. Neither was I Taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

John xiv. 26. The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, will Teach you all things.

XVI.

The Trinity in Unity have Fellowship with the faithful.

1 John i. 3. Truly our Fellowship is with the Father. —(Gr. *Κοινωνία.*)

———— And with his Son Jesus Christ.

2 Cor. xiii. 14. The Fellowship (*Κοινωνία*) of the Holy Ghost be with you all.

XVII.

The Trinity in Unity are spiritually present in the elect.

1 Cor. xiv. 25. God is In you of a truth.

2 Cor. xiii. 5. Christ is In you, except ye be reprobates.

John xiv. 17. The Spirit dwelleth with you, and shall be In you.

So again:

2 Cor. vi. 16. God hath said, I will Dwell in them.

Ephes. iii. 17. That Christ may Dwell in your hearts.

Rom. viii. 11. His Spirit that Dwelleth in you.

XVIII.

The Trinity in Unity reveal to us the Divine will.

Phil. iii. 15. God shall Reveal even this unto you.

Gal. i. 12.——neither was I taught it but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Luke ii. 26. It was Revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost. So again:

Heb. i. 1. God who Spake unto the fathers by the prophets.

2 Cor. xiii. 3. Ye seek a proof of Christ Speaking in me.

Mark xiii. 11. It is not ye that Speak, but the Holy Ghost.

And as prophecies are revealed by, so are they also delivered in the name, that is, by the special authority of, each person in the Godhead. For though the usual introduction to any Divine revelation is—Thus Saith the Lord—yet we also find the expressions—These things Saith the Son of God; Rev. ii. 18; and—Thus Saith the Holy Ghost, Acts xiii. 3, with many other passages to the same effect.

XIX.

The Trinity in Unity raised the Body of Christ from the grave.

1 Cor. vi. 14. God hath both Raised up the Lord, and will also Raise us up by his own Power. *

John ii. 19. Destroy this temple, and in three days I will Raise it up.

1 Pet. iii. 18. Christ—being put to death in the flesh, but Quickened by the Spirit.

XX.

The Trinity in Unity conduct the people of God.

Isa. xlviii. 17. I am the Lord thy God, which Leadeth thee by the way thou shouldst go.

* See Article vi. p. 4.

John x. 3. He (Christ the Shepherd) calleth his own sheep by name, and Leadeth them out.

Rom. viii. 14. As many as are Led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

XXI.

The Trinity in Unity give a commission and authority to the Ministers of the Gospel.

2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. Our sufficiency is of God who hath Made us able Ministers.

1 Tim. i. 12. Jesus Christ——counted me faithful putting me into the Ministry.

Acts xx. 28. Take heed therefore to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath Made you Overseers.

XXII.

The Trinity in Unity sanctify the elect.

Jude 1.——to them that are Sanctified by God the Father.

Heb. ii. 11. He that Sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

Rom. xv. 16. Being Sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

XXIII.

The Trinity in Unity perform all spiritual and Divine operations.

1 Cor. xii. 16. It is the same God which Worketh all in all.

Col. iii. 11. Christ is all and in all.

1 Cor. xii. 11. But all these Worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit.

CONCLUSION.

VARIOUS passages of the Scripture have been laid together, and made to unite their beams in one common centre, namely, the *Unity* of the Trinity; which unity is not metaphorical and figurative, but strict and real: and there can be no real unity in God, but that of his nature, essence, or substance, all of which are synonymous terms. This unity, considered in itself, is altogether incomprehensible: but it is one thing to read and to know that there is a Divine nature, and another thing to describe it. It is proved to be an unity of essence: 1st, because the three persons are all comprehended under the same appellation. They are the one Lord absolutely so called (art. I., III.), the Creator of the world, and the God of Israel (art. IV.). 2dly, Because they partake in common of the name Jehovah (art. II.), which, being interpreted, means the Divine Essence: and what it signifies in one person, it must also signify in the others; as truly as the singular name Adam, in its appellative capacity, expresses the common nature of all mankind. And this name neither is nor can be communicated, without a contradiction, to any derived or inferior nature, as well on account of its signification as its application, which is expressly restrained to *one only*. 3dly, It is farther proved, in that the authority (art. V.), the

secret mind (art. VI.), or counsel, and the power (art. VII.,) by which all things are established and directed, is ascribed to Christ and the Spirit in common with God the Father; and that in the same exercise of it and upon the same occasions. 4thly, Because there is a participation of such Divine attributes (art. VIII., IX., X., XI., XII.,) as cannot subsist but where they are original. Our understanding, if it be moderately instructed, will satisfy us there can be One only who is eternal, and possessed of holiness, truth, life, &c. in and from himself. Yet the whole Trinity is eternal, holy, true, living, and omnipresent: therefore these three were, and will be one God from everlasting to everlasting. 5thly, and lastly, Because there is a concurrence of the whole undivided Godhead in all those acts (art. XII. &c. to XXIII.), every one of which has in it the character of a Divine wisdom and omnipotence, and expresses such an intimate union and communion of the Holy Trinity, as the understanding of man cannot reach, and which no words can explain. For though it is and must be one God who doeth all these things, yet it is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who gave us our being, instruct and illuminate us, lead us, speak to us, and are present with us; who give authority to the Church, raise the dead, sanctify the elect, and perform every Divine and spiritual operation.

This is the God revealed to us in the holy Scripture; very different from the Deity so much talked of in our systematical schemes of natural divinity; which, with all its wisdom, never yet thought of a Christ, or an Holy Ghost, by whom nature, now fallen and blind, is

to be reformed, exalted, and saved. The Bible we know to be the infallible word of God; the rule of our faith and obedience. We find this doctrine revealed in it; therefore we firmly believe and submit to it. Had we the grace or the spirit of humility and devotion, we should not abound so much in disputation. If, on such a subject as this, we trust to our own reason, and it should prove at last to have betrayed us into error, irreligion, and blasphemy; what shall we have to say in excuse for ourselves? We shall not dare to plead the dignity and strength of our rational faculties before the tribunal of Him, who came into the world to bring the wisdom of it to nought. And if the religion of Jesus Christ is to be corrected and softened till it becomes agreeable to the natural thoughts and imaginations of the human heart, then in vain was it said,—Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.

As for that man who is convinced that God is wiser than himself, who believes as he ought, and as the Catholic Church of Christ, according to the Scripture, hath given him an example from the beginning, his danger lies on the other side: and while I venture to give him warning of it, I beseech him to suffer the word of exhortation, and to take in good part the faithful wounds of a friend. Let him take care then, that, while he values his orthodoxy, he be not led unawares to overvalue it, by drawing false conclusions from it, and conceiting himself to be already perfect. If he know and believe in the true God, he doeth well; but let not that which is an honour to him, be any encouragement to dishonour God; the knowledge

of whom will only serve to increase our condemnation, if we live in any lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles who knew him not. And though it be the faith of a Christian, and not his morality, that distinguishes him from the rest of mankind, yet that faith must appear in the conduct of his life; even as love to a friend is best witnessed by a readiness to do him service.

It is true, the service is not the love, nor of equal value with it; yet the love that refuses the service will be accounted as nothing. The mystery of faith is an invaluable treasure; and the vessel that contains it will be clean and undefiled; it is held in a pure conscience; as the manna, that glorious symbol of the word of faith preached to us by the gospel, was confined to the Tabernacle, and preserved in a vessel of gold. A mind that is conformed to this world, and given up to its pleasures, though it repeat the creed without questioning a single article of it, will be abhorred in the sight of God, as a vessel unfit for the Master's use; and unworthy, because unprepared to stand in the most holy place. It is the great excellence of faith, that it can produce such a transformation in the life and manners, as no other principle has any power to do.

The total absence of this principle produces that poor, pitiful, cowardly indifference, so much in vogue; which, if it had not by accident found the name of charity, would have been ashamed to show its face in a Christian country. They are cold and backward to promote any religious conversation; they will not appear to be in earnest about their faith in the eyes of

the world, lest they should be forced to abridge somewhat from the gayety of their lives, and to live as they speak. But let them remember, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord: no dross or impurity of this world will be suffered to continue in his sight. And in this, he is no hard master, reaping where he hath not sown, and requiring the fruit of good works without giving us strength and ability to bring them forth. He has provided us the precious blood of the Lamb, and promised the gift of the Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled to serve that living God in whom we believe. If we are purged by him, we shall be clean; if he wash us, we shall be whiter than snow: and when the kingdom of God shall come, and his glory shall appear, we shall be prepared to behold his face in righteousness.

TESTIMONY OF A CONVERT FROM UNITARIANISM.

OFFERED to mankind as a benignant revelation of practical truth, the doctrine of the Trinity ought always to be handled and presented in a spirit of Christian tenderness. None of the great Evangelical "principles" is more unfit to be made a matter of partisan controversy. Undoubtedly it is too much to expect that the sectarian temper should wholly refrain from tampering with it. Such is the fatal force of prejudice, such the energy of human passions, and such the propensity to bring down the highest and holiest things into the market-places of pride and ambition, that violent and even profane hands will sometimes be laid on the very ark of the divine mysteries,

filled with the promises and gifts of God to his children. * * * Rightly regarded, this truth of the Trinity comprehends within it the sum of God's most signal blessings. Its tone and aspect, therefore, should always be represented as cheerful and encouraging. It should appear with the freedom and joy, the engaging voice and graceful gesture of a life-giver and a deliverer. It is the herald of redemption. It bears the only key to the whole Gospel. It is the only true teacher of that song of triumph sung by the immortal multitude that no man can number. It speaks the threefold benediction of grace, mercy, and peace. It gives our sinning and sorrowing hearts one God, who is at once a real Creator, a real Redeemer, and a real Comforter,—our Father, our Saviour, our Sanctifier. * * * Its face is as the sun shining in his strength. It reconciles all the wondrous elements of man's salvation. And, for this reason, believers should preach the Trinity, and plead for it, not as seeking a victory for their party, but only the blessedness of their fellows, and the glory of the Triune himself. Those who reject it can never understand, while rejecting it, why we should keep it, as we do, foremost and uppermost in our praises and thanksgivings, our litany and our creed; and just as little, after they once see and receive it in its divine simplicity, can they understand how it should ever be suffered to hold any inferior place. Surely, then, if ever men could afford to be patient under opposition, they on whom this supreme light has risen can forbear even with injustice, with flippancy, with bitterness, in those from whom it is still hid.—*F. D. Huntington, D. D.*

No. 245.

"OUR ABSENT LORD."

"OUR absent Lord!" who that has sung the hymn containing these words, so familiar in our prayer-meetings, has not felt the thrill of tender feeling, properly aroused by the sentiment? "An absent Lord, absent in heaven!" Not that he is no longer in our world. Not that these scenes of his suffering, this theatre of the grandest displays of his grace, no more awaken his concern. Divine, he could not be absent or unconcerned; and in accordance with his gracious promise, he reveals himself to faith as continually present, and present everywhere to manifest his love, and power, and wisdom, as actively as ever. But the human nature of Jesus, the *man* Christ, has been borne away. It tabernacles nowhere on earth. He, whom the apostles saw and handled is beyond the clouds, enthroned in glory. Faith tells us so, and faith gives us actual acquaintance with the fact, that many centuries ago that Being walked our earth But faith in no way removes the truth that the visible Master is far away from our world. This fact has already been the occasion of most important events on earth, as well as in heaven. Our Lord's absence has transferred the hatred borne to him, and the indignities offered to him by the world, to his followers. It has been made the professed cause of the establishment of one, claiming headship over the church, in the Papal chair. We cannot suppose that the daring usurpation of these men of sin would have been so much as conceived of, had Jesus himself, in a visible body, conducted the affair of his church.

The departure of Jesus has invested the spots, memorable in his earthly sojourn, with the most touching of associations, and imparted inspiration to such heart-stirring pictures of scenes in Palestine, as McCheyne and others have given to us. Wanderings in the Holy Land have thus become means of grace to not a few.

More than one Christian song have obtained their power and sentiment from this great truth. Nay, it may safely be affirmed that in a score of ways the absence of our Lord has given character to the piety of the Christian and to the impiety of the wicked. Is it not one prominent and interesting feature of Christianity that its Head is absent? Must we not, as we dwell in thought or word upon the humanity of Jesus, still be dwelling on his departure, talking of it, exulting in it?

We know that the absence of the Saviour shaped the thoughts and themes of primitive Christians; we feel that his dwelling bodily in our world now would work vast changes in the operations and views, if not in the spirit, of all Christendom, and the whole world. And hence it is easily seen, if it were only felt, that the matter has deep importance. Is not the fact of Christ's absence as clear and obvious now as it has ever been? Are not the other solemn events associated with it when Jesus left the world, as closely associated at this period as at any previous period?

Perhaps professing Christians do not allow these ends due influence over their minds. May it not be that we do not reach the intentions of the Saviour here, and that while he, by his absence, *would* be administering largely to our spiritual profit, we in blindness go on, ignorant of his merciful designs and unprofited by them?

I speak not here of the necessity and propriety—these were that he, having finished his work on earth, and having a reward on high, as well as a part of his

work (intercession) to perform there, should leave this world. But I speak here of purposes, concerning more immediately our own souls in every day life. I refer to considerations and motives drawn from this event, intended to be presented by it, and thus addressing our hearts.

(1.) It is an obvious tendency of Christ's absence, to enlarge and improve the love and obedience of those professing faith in him. And how? Love and obedience are placed upon the ground of a trusting, living faith, and that tends to expand them. Perhaps we cannot explain how it is, to the satisfaction of every mind, but such is the fact. Sight narrows the bounds of our affections, causing interruptions or misconceptions. Faith elevates the character of the demand for love and obedience, presents brighter, more animating motives, lifts us above chilling calculations. Napoleon was accustomed to say that no man could appear the hero to his valet. And we know from experience that close intercourse with distinguished persons rarely fails to lessen our admiration; not because in every case their merits are not truly great, but our sense obscures those merits by magnifying unimportant blemishes. An acquaintance with them by faith most frequently secures greater justice in our estimation of their character.

Hence it is that, with reference to our absent Lord, there is perfect truth in those lofty words, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." There was wisdom in the obedience of Moses, who at God's command forsook all things, and "endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

But the absence of Jesus improves the love and obedience yielded to him, also. For it sifts professions of love and acts of obedience, and tests their purity. "Is the follower's love unselfish enough to secure his

cheerful consent to that arrangement, by which his Lord is glorified, and he left to receive the stripes, the wrongs else heaped on Jesus?" To such a test Christ subjected the apostles. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I." This applies to us as well as to the apostles. And, will this love lead us to abide faithful during a long absence of the Master? Will it carry our desires and longings onward to the time of his return, so that it will be a description of us, "loving his appearing?" And will our obedience prove itself real, sincere, no eye-service, by remaining and increasing, though no visible eye be upon us?

Doubtless all this has already operated to give preciousness to Christian love and obedience. It did so, we know, in a powerful degree in apostolic days. Perhaps, Christian reader, you have felt its blessed effects. Thank God for it every day. If we thus find our love and obedience expanded, then, I conceive, our Master's absence is not in vain; this end has in part been met.

(2.) The absence of Jesus has been connected inseperably with his coming again; the latter explains the former, and comforts his followers in view of it: hence in the fact of absence is found the loudest call for watchfulness in view of that coming. Was there not such a meaning in the language of the shining ones on the mount of Ascension, which blended together the going and returning? Did not apostles and primitive Christians understand it so, in dwelling more on Christ's return than perhaps any generation of believers since? And so around every thought of an *absent* Lord is thrown the thrilling and inciting association of a *coming* Lord. We ever watch and ever wait, as we ever have before our minds the fact that Jesus is not with us bodily. The force of this is, that he who watches aright, watches unto prayer, watches himself that he sin not, that his heart be pure, his

faith and obedience and love, active, his life consistent, that he thus may be always in readiness for his Lord's return. If this motive duly influenced us, no stronger incentive to true Christian love and labour, perhaps, could be discovered. True, we may not expect a visible revelation of Jesus ere our natural lives close; his appearing to us may first be the hour of death. But still we as much as others are to meet him when he comes; our death in no way interferes with that meeting, except that it vastly lessens the apparent distance of that event, by carrying our souls into that land where no measurements of time exist, and thus death only forms an additional incitement to watching. If we had no such grace as faith, then perhaps no spur to watchfulness could be derived from an appearing, which lies beyond the time of our departure. But the Christian *walks* by faith; then should he walk, live continually watchful and waiting. Reader, do you feel the power of this motive? Is the blessed purpose accomplished in your experience? Oh! dwell upon the theme: as certain as it is that Christ is not here, so certain is it that by and by he will come; we must get ready and be ready; we must watch!

(3.) As our Lord *withdrew* from the world that he might send the Comforter, the converting, sanctifying, and comforting Spirit, so now he *remains* away that that Spirit may still come and shed his influences upon the world. As soon as the Spirit has finished *his* work on earth in gathering the last subjects of grace into the kingdom, Christ's absence will end.

Hence what boundless incentive to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost! Jesus has promised to send indeed, but Christians must seek the blessed Missionary's presence. Do our hearts recoil at the very thought that the Master's ends in his departure should be defeated by us as far as we can be said or are able to do so? Then let us invoke the Holy Ghost. Is it our desire to keep our absent Lord's commands?

We must pray for the descent of the Spirit. Do we long, and wait, and pine for his return? Ere he do so, in answer to earnest prayer, the Comforter must come down, as necessarily as that Jesus should ascend before power from on high was felt. In these glorious days, America, and Ireland, Scotland, and Sweden, are enjoying pentecostal showers of the Spirit's influences. And why? Because our Lord is absent. Because our Lord is coming again. Brother! Sister! Does your heart droop? Does the prayer for the Holy Ghost die away on your lip? Bestir yourself. Take the sweet comfort and incentive of this precious truth. The dark places of the earth still are the habitations of cruelty. How many regions of our own land have not as yet so much as heard with their own ears the sound of the going in the tops of the mulberry trees! Oh! we have need yet of those influences which our absent Lord went from us to secure.

(4.) Our Master's departure and continued absence peculiarly touch the heart in favour of all his commands, and especially the latest ones. Is it not a fact that the absence by decease, or a distant journey, of a beloved friend, gives the deepest and tenderest interest to his known wishes? Ah! the affectionate child knows no earthly motive so strong as that contained in the words of a departed mother—"She wished me to do so; she warned me in her dying moments against this step; her last request was that I should guard this gift." Yes, wishes, acts, example, secure a thrilling power when thus sweetly associated. Our Lord has thrown such an influence into the scale in behalf of his commands, his deeds, his pattern, by his withdrawal. Especially around his last commands is this sacred association cast. Is this not so with the injunction to watch and pray, pronounced in the agonies of Gethsemane, and the "new commandment" to love one another, laid down in his parting instructions? "This do in remembrance of me," it seems

that it was peculiarly with these great duties, watching and loving, that our absent Lord connected the sealing memories of his departure. Can we doubt that this thought gives power to the words,

'We'll gird our loins, my brethren dear,
Our heavenly home discerning;
Our *absent Lord* hath left us word,
'Let every lamp be burning?'"

Let this touching plea for unity and love penetrate our hearts with sympathy and mutual forbearance. Let this test go through every denominational effort, "Will our absent and common Lord approve?" It will sweep away all passion and bitterness. It will hasten to the meridian this dawning day of fraternal love. Christian, let this thought echo in your heart, and lend power to every command of Jesus.

(5.) Reader, are you an unconverted person? The truths, thus hastily sketched, have a bearing on you; this concluding one, also. The absence of Jesus was, and is intended to give a sinful world a solemn lesson as to the depth and extent of the depravity in the heart. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. All these things will they do unto you for my name's sake." By your treatment of the followers of Christ, it is manifest that a hearty dislike to the principles and Author of Christianity exists in the world, and in your heart. You say, perhaps truly, that you do not sensibly hate the pious, that you do not violently oppose or persecute them. But does not your heart instinctively, as it were, feel an unconquerable aversion to their themes and presence? Honestly, do you not relish the exposure of their weaknesses and inconsistencies? And what is this but the germ of that sentiment which, when external restraints have been removed, results in persecution? You presume and declare that if Jesus were now in the world, you would gladly approach him for

salvation. Alas! you know not the weakness and insincerity of your heart. Our absent Lord has said that what is done to the least of his disciples is done to him; and blessed are they that have not seen, and yet believe. Learn the lesson of sin thus taught you, and be moved to true penitence. Remember our absent Lord is present by his grace still; he invites you as he did when in our world, as he would, if now bodily present.

FAINT, YET PURSUING.

Awake, our souls! (away our fears,
  Let every trembling thought be gone;)
Awake, and run the heavenly race,
  And put a cheerful courage on.

True, 'tis a strait and thorny road,
  And mortal spirits tire and faint;
But they forget the mighty God
  Who feeds the strength of every saint.

The mighty God, whose matchless power
  Is ever new, and ever young;
And firm endures, while endless years
  Their everlasting circles run.

From thee, the overflowing spring,
  Our souls shall drink a full supply;
While such as trust their native strength,
  Shall melt away, and droop, and die.

Swift as an eagle cuts the air,
  We'll amount aloft to thine abode;
On wings of love our souls shall fly,
  Nor tire amidst the heavenly road.

Watts.

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"A CAKE NOT TURNED,"

OR THE INCONSISTENT PROFESSOR.

BY REV. C. C. CORSS.

In the Scriptures, sense is never sacrificed to sound. The expression which will best convey the idea intended, or the illustration which will make it the most plain, is employed. And yet the Scriptures never seem to us to be wanting in dignity, any more than in meaning. When the prophet calls Ephraim "a cake not turned," we recognize, in the history of Ephraim, the correctness of the description.

Ephraim, as the kingdom of Israel was often called after the revolt of the ten tribes, was even more addicted to idolatry than the kingdom of Judah. He had not one king who is not described as doing evil in the sight of the Lord; and yet, he had some prophets raised up, who faithfully warned him, and laboured to teach him the truth.

The charge brought against Ephraim was, that he had "mixed himself among the people." Uniting with the heathen nations around him in their idolatrous worship, was the "mixing among the people" which the prophet meant. This produced in him the inconsist-

ency which appeared in his principles and conduct. This inconsistency is set forth in the significant emblem of an unturned cake. "Ephraim is a cake not turned." A cake which remains over the fire without being turned, is burnt on one side, and raw on the other; and thus neither side is fit to be eaten. Such was Ephraim. He was very zealous in many of the practices of his heathen neighbours, and thus he was a cake burnt on one side; he was desirous also of being considered a worshipper of God according to the law of Moses, and thus he was a raw cake on the other side; for his Judaism, like the raw side of an unturned cake, was worthless when mixed with idolatry. Years after the time of Hosea it was said of the Samaritans, that they "feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children and their children's children; as did their fathers, so do they unto this day."

As a consequence of mixing himself among the people, Ephraim lost discernment to discern between truth and error. His creed was composed of articles taken partly from paganism, and partly from the law of Moses, without his seeming to know but that they were all from the oracles of God. He seems to have had but a confused notion of right and wrong; and in consequence of this, and his long familiarity with wrong, wrong had nearly ceased to be odious in his sight. So far as he recognized any distinction between them, his own feelings and preferences were the criterion of his judgment. He was familiar with the idolatrous rites of Syria and Babylon; he loved them, and he did not see how anything could be wrong, which he loved to consider as right. He became much pleased with his

heathen neighbours, the worshippers of Ashtaroth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon; and as he was pleased with the persons, it was not in his heart to be displeased with their religion. He abounded in what, in these days, would be called *charity*. He could worship God according to the law of Moses, and he could enjoy himself in worshipping in the house of Rimmon, or of Baal-peor. He seems to have believed that there were as godly people among Moabites and Assyrians, as among the worshippers of the God of Israel. He could hold fellowship with all denominations; and he regarded as sectarian bigots those prophets who were continually warning him not to partake of the abominations of Baal and Ashtaroth. Whether he was of the sort of persons whom Solomon would have called "over-much righteous," it is not easy to say; but he seems to have had a wonderful capacity, so to speak, for religion. He had a vast amount of religion. No one system of worship was sufficient to fill his hands or his heart; he must have three or four to meet the demands of his spiritual appetite. He seems to have supposed, that the greater the number of religions he embraced, the more eminent he would be as a saint of the Most High. He knew, if he kept the law of God as revealed in the Scriptures then known to the Jews, it was all that was required of him; and if this was so, then, by observing other sorts of religion also, why could he not do more than was required of him? In this manner, like some in later times, he could not only be perfect, but his works of supererogation would also procure him a fund of merit, which could

be laid by as security for him in the time of need. He seems to have thought religion good in the sight of God, not according to the quality of it, but precisely in proportion to the quantity; and he had enough in quantity to pay the price of long indulgence, if he should ever afterwards become deficient in his duties. Our Saviour, eight centuries afterwards, taught that no man can serve two masters, but Ephraim thought otherwise. He thought he could serve several masters; and he thought the more masters he served, the better.

Ephraim was a unionist, if we are to judge of his sentiments by his practices. He became so enamoured with the idea of union, as to overlook the principle of similarity, on which all real union in religion is based; for we find him uniting with all the various denominations then known in that portion of the world. He seems to have considered himself as doing God service by bringing about a union of different sects. He did not see that he was promoting a union with fundamental error; and that all the concession made for the sake of union was made by the better form of religion in favour of the worse. The others never met him half-way. He would not contend for nice speculative points in religion; he would be liberal, and the people among whom he mixed would also be liberal. He went to Egypt and Assyria to get improvements in religion; and he was accommodating to those who differed from him. It was for this reason that the prophet compared him to "a silly dove without heart." He was a silly dove for allowing himself to be led astray by wicked and designing men; and he was with-

out a heart to receive and obey the truth. Strangers had devoured his strength, and he knew it not; yea, gray hairs were upon him here and there, and he knew it not. He was an unturned cake, both sides of which are worthless. His idolatry contained a mixture of the truth; and the truth he had learned from Scripture was corrupted by a mixture of idolatry.

Ephraim stands as the representative of a somewhat numerous class of persons of every country and every age; for we may be sure that human nature will prove true to itself in every situation. Some have supposed the prevalence of spurious charity to be peculiar to the present day; but Ephraim was as good an example of it as any of the proselyting spirits of modern times. It is true, the first Christians under the apostles and their immediate successors had nothing of it. And during the middle ages, and in some instances since, different sects of Christians have stood at a sufficient distance from each other; but even then, when anathematizing each other, they were ready to adopt notions and ceremonies borrowed from the heathen. So Ephraim, while he had no fellowship with the kingdom of Judah, was very charitable towards idolaters. Indeed, every generation has its Ephraims over and over again, in one form or another. Every person who professes the truth, and yet allows himself to mix with the advocates of essential error in their acts of worship, does what Ephraim was reproved by the prophet for doing, and the effect of it is the same that it always was. The multitudes who familiarize their minds with error, by degrees lose the power of discriminating between error and truth. By hearing the one as much

as the other, the ear becomes equally familiar with the sound of both; and even those who do not gain a relish for error, cease to regard it with much aversion. It may be an idle curiosity which they seek at first to gratify, as it perhaps was with Ephraim of old; but in this way they go into temptation, and give encouragement to error. But generally their mixing among the people indicates a sympathy with the practices of the people. This greatly increases the evil; for if Ephraim had been cast among idolaters without "itching ears" for their idolatrous worship, he would have become disgusted with it at once, and would have mingled with them no more. And where this sympathy with error exists, an Ephraim of old, or one of modern date, does not fail to find good reasons, in his own estimation, for mixing himself among the people. He is impartial, and willing to hear both sides. The people, too, will come to hear *him*, if he will go to hear *them*. In this way he hopes to correct their errors, and do them much good. But all his excuses are a hypocritical pretence, or at best he is deceived by his own heart. He goes because he likes to be there; and the result is what might be expected; he imbibes error himself, instead of correcting the errors of others.

"Lead us not into temptation." How important to observe this petition of our Lord's prayer! If children can be kept from temptation, they may be kept from ruin. The person who keeps clear of intoxicating drinks does not become a drunkard. If a child were allowed to frequent drinking shops and gambling rooms, it would be strange if he escaped the contagion. Some well instructed and conscientious ones might be

brought in contact with such things, and not be ruined; but the majority are not conscientious and well-instructed; or even if they were, they could not be much exposed to such temptations with safety. Now, religious error is as contagious as vice; and he who hankers to mix himself among it has already entered into temptation, and should take the advice he would give to his child, who was inclined to be in bad company; viz., keep away. For what presents a more dangerous temptation, especially to the young, than the flesh-pleasing doctrines which are found in nearly all the systems of error?

History and observation confirm the truth of the statements just made. Those who mix themselves among the people do not escape the taint of the errors with which they often come in contact. Converted heathens generally retain some remains of heathenism as long as they live. Even Luther never entirely freed himself from the effects of his Romish education. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Hence Christians, even those who profess a form of sound doctrine, but who are not skilled in the Scriptures, often fail to distinguish between truth and error on important points, in consequence of mixing themselves among the people. Being accustomed to the sound of error, nearly as much as to the sound of the truth, they mix up contradictions in doctrine, without perceiving the incongruity. Nor is it strange, when half their associations are in Ashdod, that they should talk half in the speech of Ashdod. All know the danger of tampering with wrong. He who has not yet abandoned himself to wickedness we expect will ere long

do so, if he is often seen standing in the way where the wicked meet. We do not judge that he will long be a mere spectator. Men cannot take fire in their bosoms, and their clothes not be burned. If parents would secure their children against the contaminating influence of religious error, let them keep them away from the places in which they will be exposed to the danger. Do not talk about hearing both sides. The religion of the Bible has not two sides; and to go into the midst of error to hear both sides in order to learn the truth, is like going among knaves to learn the principles of honesty.

Let not the reader misunderstand the object of these remarks. It is not to discountenance Christian fellowship among the various denominations that hold to the doctrines of grace; it is rather to warn men against confounding what is evangelical with what is not. Such confusion is an evil of no small magnitude, and of very common occurrence. It is painful to see men running to hear and encourage falsehood, because they do not know what belongs to evangelical doctrine. The term evangelical, and the evangelical denominations have long been so well defined and understood, that any essential mistake on that subject seems unnecessary.

There are probably those who will not bear remonstrance on this subject. They will declare, that they will only go the more to hear every wind of doctrine, in consequence of such interference to prevent it. This was what Ephraim did. He was warned by the prophets not to mix himself among idolatrous people; but go he would, and only the more for being warned

against it. When Jerusalem received a similar warning from Jeremiah, the reply was, "I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." Self-will proves the ruin of many.

The danger the unwary are in is increased, because error seldom comes out at once in its true character. When first propagated in a place, it is usually presented in smooth, flattering, flesh-pleasing words, with great pretensions to love and union, and under the guise of great zeal for doing good. It is intimated and implied, not plainly expressed. It is thrown out in ambiguous terms and phrases so guardedly chosen as to admit of an interpretation in a good sense.

It works by stratagem. Often you can detect error in the sentiments of a speaker by what he leaves unsaid, more than by what he says. Sometimes error is preached with such ingenuity, that many well informed hearers are not aware of listening to error; but it is not the less likely to have an injurious effect, in consequence of not being apprehended in its true light by the hearer. If a man denies the doctrine of the Trinity in plain words, you understand him, and treat him accordingly; but if he only finds fault with the terms commonly employed to express the doctrine, and wishes more suitable ones had been employed, persons not acquainted with the adroitness of the advocates of error might not suspect the speaker to be a disbeliever in the Trinity. When a speaker asserts, that God, or that Christ, will do no more than he has already done for the salvation of any man, the unsuspecting hearer might take it to mean, that Christ will not die again on the cross, when it was in reality intended to deny

all divine influence upon men in their conversion and salvation. So if a speaker, or writer, professes to believe in the personality and influences of the Spirit, but recognizes the Spirit "only in the word," or only as "God in operation," the discerning hearer, or reader, will understand it to be a virtual denial of the Spirit's personality. Men may talk of an atonement while denying the Divinity of Christ, and many may be deceived by it; but those who have scriptural views of an atonement will see it to be impossible for any, except a Divine Being, to accomplish such a work. Or if men declare their belief in salvation by grace, and at the same time adopt a theory of justification by works, grace is manifestly excluded.

The doctrine of the so called "sleep of the soul," however plausible it may appear to some, in reality involves the denial of the existence of the soul; for if man has a soul, it never sleeps. It is not uncommon to hear men who deny the Divinity of Christ, maintain that there is not much difference between them and other Christians; but to say that there is not much difference between those who believe in the Divinity of Christ, and those who call it in question, is equivalent to saying that there is not much difference between God and man. Ephraim seems to have entertained a similar notion; for had he been aware of the vast difference between God and idols, he would not have attempted the worship of both.

There is not a greater contradiction than an unturned cake, being burned on one side, and raw on the other. For this reason it is a symbol of any person who attempts to unite contradictions in religion. To

profess the doctrines of grace, and to frequent the places where essential errors are preached; to be a church member, and to go to scenes of worldly pleasure to find enjoyment; to be a reader of fiction, and weep over scenes of imaginary distress, and yet not be moved by actual suffering at the next door; to strain out a gnat and swallow a camel; to worship God and idolize the world; or to have that spasmodic sort of religion, which shows itself in over-heated zeal at one time, and at another time in coldness which lacks the pulsations of spiritual life; is to act like him of old, whom the prophet denominated an unturned cake.

The Scriptures contain many warnings against that mixing among the people, which brings the truth into connection with error. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house; neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds."

Let all take warning from the example of Ephraim, not to mix themselves among the people. With him the consequence was, he imbibed the sentiments, and adopted the idolatrous practices of the people. His

children, too, joined the people, and went to ruin with them. And how many children of members of evangelical churches, in different parts of the country, are doing the same! Parents mingle with the people, and their children join the people. In this way thousands of the children of the church are led to adopt the most mischievous errors. "He who walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

INCONSTANCY LAMENTED.

Eternal Source of light and grace,
We hail thy sacred name;
Through every year's revolving round,
Thy goodness is the same.

Inconstant service we repay,
And treacherous vows renew;
False as the morning's fleeting cloud,
And transient as the dew.

In flowing tears of guilt we mourn,
And loud implore thy grace,
To bear our feeble footsteps on,
In all thy righteous ways.

Armed with this energy divine,
Our souls shall steadfast move;
And with increasing transports press
On to thy courts above.

So by thy power the morning sun
Pursues his radiant way;
Brightens each moment in his race,
And shines to perfect day.

No. 247.

GROWTH IN GRACE;

ITS MEANS AND ITS EVIDENCES.

BY THE
REV. S. J. M. EATON.

THE character and position of the believer in Christ is altogether peculiar in this world. As a man, he mingles with his fellow men in the scenes of this world's business. He bears the same outward resemblance—wants, and weeps, and suffers, as they do, and like them, he is hurrying onward to the grave. But as a *renewed* man, he differs from his fellow men of the world. They bear the image of the earthy, he bears the image of the heavenly. They live for this world alone, he lives for a world that is far away. Their hopes and their happiness cease, when death comes and shuts the scene. His hopes then change to fruition, and his enjoyment then commences its eternal development.

The pathway of the world's worshipper is through the wilderness, and around it heaven casts no light. He gropes his way through the shadows, and as he proceeds, those shadows become more terrible and hopeless in their gloom, until he comes to the confines of time and eternity, when he sinks into "the blackness of darkness for ever."

Not so "the path of the just." It is "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the

perfect day." That light is from above. It is placed in the soul by the great Source of all light and knowledge—ever burning brightly on the inner shrine, it will direct the believer, gradually, yet surely, to the great spiritual temple on high, where "the Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof."

The term *grace*, in the Scriptures, is one of general use, but varies somewhat in signification. Its most general signification is, "the favour of God to dying men." When it is applied to the experience of the believer, we understand that principle of new life, implanted at regeneration, that gives the believer his activity, that animates him in his struggles, assures him of God's favour here, and is the instrument of his gradual preparation for glory.

The means of this growth are in our reach. This growth in grace must be important, for on it depends our present peace and joy in God, and the beauty and splendour of our crown in glory.

I. What are some of the *means* of growth in grace? God calls his people from the error and darkness of sin, and renews them by the power of his Holy Spirit, but as a general thing, he does not at once perfect the work of sanctification, but proceeds gradually, as he does all his works now, in the use of means. Knowledge is important, and where shall we look for spiritual knowledge but in the book of God—that awful volume, that connects in its history a lost and a redeemed world?

To the Bible, the Christian is indebted for all his spiritual knowledge. It is a lamp to his feet and a light to his path. It casts a clear, and yet a melancholy light upon the past, telling him of man's original

purity and glory—how sin entered in and destroyed the beauty of earth, and buried that exalted soul of his in ruin. And then it throws a clear and glorious light upon the future. It tells him how "life and immortality are brought to light" in the gospel. It points him to an Almighty Saviour, who has appeared to retrieve the ruin of the fall. He traces the history of that Redeemer, as that strong, earnest heart of his struggled up through the fiery crested billows of human and Divine wrath, working out deliverance for his people. He gazes upon his tears, he listens to his sighs and groans, and shrieks as he trode the winepress alone, and bore the awful burden of the world's guilt.

When the believer reflects upon these things, they tell him of sin, of the sin of his nature, and of his heart. They tell him of the awful nature of sin, requiring the sacrifice of the Son of God, in order to his deliverance. And in Christ, as a manifestation of the Divine nature, the Christian sees what God requires—a life of purity, a life of holiness, a life of love.

But more than this, the Bible reveals something of the glories of the upper Sanctuary, where the good, and virtuous, and pious, being perfectly sanctified, will worship God in the beauty of holiness, through all eternity. It draws aside the veil and exhibits to him the golden streets of the Holy City—the tree of life, and the pure river that flows from the throne, with the assurance, that "into it shall enter nothing that defileth." These things show the believer the value of his inheritance, and the importance of pressing on vigorously in his preparation for its enjoyments.

And then in God's word he reads the record of the lives and struggles of those who have gone before;

> "Who wrestled hard, as we do now
> With sins, and doubts, and fears."

He reads how Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Jonah, sinned, and repented. He sees that those who are now stronger than the angels of God, and brighter than the Seraphim before the throne, once suffered and wept like himself—were weak and sinful like himself, and how, leaning upon the strength of Jehovah, they were made strong, and at last triumphed gloriously through Him that loved them.

By the study of the Scriptures, the Christian learns the state of his own heart. He learns the requirements of God's law, the nature of his service, and the terms of discipleship. He compares their requirements with his own progress and growth, and finding how deficient he is, its warnings admonish him, and its promises encourage him to press on, and endeavour to arrive at "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." In the word of God, the Christian is led by "the still waters," and made to lie down in the "green pastures," and he feels, "if such the streams, what must the fountain be," and longs and pants for complete deliverance from sin, in the perfect holiness of God.

Growth in grace is also promoted by *self-examination.* It is well to be acquainted with our own hearts. "Know thyself" was the saying of one of the wise men of Greece. "Commune with your own heart," is the injunction of one wiser than all the sages of

heathenism. By examining ourselves in the fear of God, we at once acknowledge the defects of our nature, and seek his assistance in correcting those defects. We see our remissness, we feel our infirmities, we mourn over our errors. And to an honest inquiring mind, nothing is so great an incentive to improvement, as the fact of being convinced of its remissness. The active, growing Christian is always acquainted with his duty. A search into the hidden depths of his heart reveals its defects, and, God's Spirit assisting him, he is led to "mortify the flesh, with its affections and lusts." When the Christian is sincerely desirous of knowing his own state, the Spirit always assists his search, reveals to him gradually his imperfections, leads him to the cross, and then manifests himself as the Comforter, binding up his broken heart, and communicating to him strength, and vigour, and courage.

The *ordinances* are means of growth in grace. God has appointed a place of meeting with his people. That place is the mercy-seat. When the Christian's heart is sad, and his eyes overflow with tears, he can come there and weep upon the bosom of his merciful heavenly Father. More confidently can he lean upon that heavenly support, than the little child lays his sobbing heart and aching head upon the maternal bosom. And the more this duty of prayer is attended to by the Christian, the more will he feel his wants and his need of the help of God; the want, and the desire, and the supplication, will bring help from on high. Trembling with his own weakness, and looking to the mighty Priest of Calvary, the believer exclaims —"Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that

we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

But the Master has founded for his people a sacred feast, that is made the instrument of their special nourishment and growth in grace. His flesh is meat indeed,—his blood is drink indeed. These outward emblems, in their sublime simplicity, are made efficient means of spiritual progress; Christ is the life of the believer's soul. And the more Christ is seen, the more will this life fill his soul. In this ordinance, he sees the evil of sin, that required a Divine sacrifice; he sees the love of God, that spared not his own Son; he sees the riches of Divine grace, that makes a poor condemned sinner a partaker of the Divine nature.

By this ordinance the believer is strengthened, he becomes more dead to sin, and more alive to holiness. He is armed against temptation, he is refreshed in soul, and goes on from strength to strength, until he appears before God in Zion.

The dispensations of Providence are means of grace. Hitherto we have spoken of those means that God hath placed within our reach, and which we may neglect or employ at our leisure; we now speak of God's disciplinary dealing in trials and afflictions. Still, even these may tend to our good, or to our condemnation, as we may improve them or not. If we fail to notice the hand that sent them upon us, and murmur and repine at their infliction, they will harden our hearts and expose us to yet heavier judgments. But if we bear in mind that they are from God, that affliction cometh not of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, and are more anxious that they

should be sanctified to us, than removed; they become efficient means of growth in grace.

Affliction, to the Christian, is the revealer of secrets. It shows him his true character. It is the fiery furnace, that burns up the wood, hay, and stubble, leaving only the pure gold. It discloses to him the weakness and heartlessness of the world, dries up the fountains of earthly pleasure, causes him to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and by the assistance of God's Spirit, leads him for relief to the living fountains of water. The dispensations of Providence constitute a course of discipline, by which the great God is gradually preparing his people for a higher and more exalted state of being, where affliction will terminate, in an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

II. What are some of the *evidences* of this growth in grace? We are here not to speak of the evidences of a gracious state, but of the progressive development of this gracious state. The life of the Christian is one of frequent and earnest struggles, and this state of conflict will continue, until he puts off the harness of the battle, and enters into rest. But with all the struggles, and doubts, and fears, there is, in the heart of the Christian, a principle of Divine life that is ever active, and that should be continually progressive. The evidences of this progress are his daily walk, and conversation, and internal consciousness.

This growth will be manifested by *an increase of spiritual light and knowledge.* When the believer first meets Christ at the cross, his heart is made joyful by the forgiveness of sins. He then sets out upon the great journey, but he is but a babe in Christ. He may

be full of zeal, and impelled by the love of his recent espousals, may seem to outstrip, in the heavenly race, many of those who are veterans of the cross. But there is mingled with his love and zeal much of human passion and natural imagination. He walks too much by sight and not enough by faith. But time and the rough experience of life, show him his error. God's Spirit gives him light—he sees his own ignorance and weakness, and looks to the great source of wisdom and strength in the heavens.

At first, the believer sees but indistinctly—sees men as trees walking. But as the leaven works in his soul, his vision is purified and strengthened. He has more distinct views of the glory of God, and of the plan of redemption. He sees the gospel, as the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation, to the guilty, sin-polluted soul. Seeing and feeling, that daily and hourly he must lean upon Christ and receive of his grace, he learns to regard him as altogether lovely.

But the growing Christian attains a deeper knowledge of the sinfulness of his own heart. Comparing his experience with the standard of God's word, he trembles, and almost falters in his pathway, crying out with the apostle, "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The believer, if he be advancing in the Divine life, will, day by day, be deeply humbled, as he looks into his heart, and sees so little pure and genuine love to God, how strong a hold sin yet has upon him, and how ready he is to fall into temptation. Progress in the way always reveals the errors of the past, and the imperfections of the present.

Another evidence of spiritual progress is *improvement in gracious affections.* "The affections are the sensible exercise of the inclination of the soul." In the believer, that inclination, or at least its general tenor, will be to glorify God. If he love with the deepest intensity of his heart, the object is God. If he desire with a full soul, the object is to perfect holiness in the fear of God. If hope expand his soul, his object is that which lies "within the veil."

The newborn Christian is conscious of a burning, glowing love for God and holiness. He feels that nothing could turn him from God. Like Peter, he is ready to go with his Master to prison and to death. But the shock of temptation comes—the chill blasts of the world's coldness sweep over his soul, and he finds that much of that which he regarded as genuine love and zeal, was but excited human feeling. His path seems to gather darkness; but it is only the departing of the false lights of sense, leaving the light of Christ burning alone, but beautifully, upon the inner shrine. His affections are weaned from earth and centred upon Christ. He looks upon God, as a being of holiness and love. He loves him for the perfection of his nature. He loves Jesus Christ for the purity and beauty of his character, and the preciousness of his work. He loves to contemplate heaven, because there his God, his Saviour, reigns. If the Christian be growing in grace, these feelings will be growing stronger and stronger, "until the day dawn, and the shadows flee away."

Another evidence of this progress is *improvement in holy enjoyments.* The spiritual enjoyment of the

Christian is, at the first, like the intermittent spring, that gushes from the mountain's side. It bursts forth with impetuosity, but soon expends itself, when it must delay to gather new strength. But as the principle of grace strengthens in his soul, his enjoyments become more regular and uniform. Grace supplies the fountain, and his enjoyments are like the rivulet from an unfailing spring, that glides along, watering and refreshing the waste of earth, unseen, perhaps, by the world, and unnoticed by the refreshing green that marks its progress. And as the word of God progresses in his soul, he is elevated more and more above the things of time, and obtains clearer views of "the land that is very far off." Sweet notes of celestial music vibrate upon his heart. The voices of the beautiful thrill his soul with their melody, and he longs for the time when he shall tune his harp, and join the choir of his redeemed brethren in glory.

If the believer be growing in grace, he will enjoy the ordinances of God's house more. He will enjoy religious conversation with increasing zest. His aspirations will be stronger and stronger after God and divine things, and all his enjoyments will be more and more spiritual and related to heaven. His soul will hunger after the hidden manna of God. His spirit will thirst for a serener element than time affords, and "grow faint for the undying waters," that flow from the throne of God.

We might speak of other evidences of growth in grace, but time would fail. We might tell of those bright stars that come out with their light and twinkling, causing the pathway of the Christian to grow

brighter and brighter, until he almost realizes the perfect day, even upon earth. We might speak of a growing conscientiousness in duty; of a fear of sinning; of a habitual watchfulness against besetting sin; of a growing meekness and humility, and of an entire and confident reliance on Jesus Christ, as all his salvation and all his desire. All these things mark the progress of the Christian towards perfection. They tell of a heart changed by grace, of a world crucified to Christ, and of a spirit ripening for glory, and honour, and immortality.

It may be difficult to reconcile some of these views with the experience of the Christian; for the growing Christian feels so sensibly his own weakness and imperfections, that he fears, that instead of advancing, he is going back in the divine life. But this may flow from that very spiritual light that is brightening his pathway. As the magnitude of spiritual objects is set before him, he feels the inadequacy of his conceptions; as their excellency is revealed, he feels the faintness of his affections; and as his desires for purity and holiness enlarge, he trembles at the slightness of his attainments. And yet these very things urge him on to perfection and glory. They are God's means. Grace is a heavenly plant, yet it thrives best in a lowly soil. With all his humility, and tears, and reproaches, the believer, if he has these experiences, must be ripening for heaven.

"The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Christ is the pure light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The world was very dark when Christ

came. He came to remove the darkness and lead men to salvation. He planted his cross upon Calvary. The guilty sinner comes there, and light enters his soul. He goes on his way rejoicing, as that light glows and shines brighter and purer on the inner shrine. The pathway of earth leads him to the tomb. He finds even that dark resting-place illuminated, and he passes through the valley and shadow of death without fear and without terror. And when day dawns on the night of the grave—that day that will not fear the coming on of night, that light will be perfect and glorious. The poor, weeping, groaning, struggling Christian will emerge from all his darkness and fears, into the pure, and holy, and exalted atmosphere of God's love.

The Christian should grow and improve in time. The means are afforded—they are set before him. He should lay aside every weight. He should press toward the mark. If he grow in grace upon earth, he will be rich in glory in heaven. His capacities will enlarge through the cherishing influences of love divine, until his harp echoes strains more joyful and triumphant than those of the Cherubim, as that mighty multitude whom no man can number, burst forth in the thrilling melody of the New Song—"Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

No. 248.

FIELDS WHITE TO HARVEST

BY THE REV. R. H. BEATTIE

Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.—JOHN iv. 35.

THE circumstances under which our Saviour uttered these words help us to their true explanation. The conversation with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well had been held, and she, under deep impressions from the truth, had gone back to the city and related to her neighbors what she had heard; in the mean time the disciples having returned from the city were with Jesus, and to them alone he addressed the words which are now under consideration. A grain-bearing plain of great fertility spread the prospect of harvest before him, and, as it would seem, while he was speaking, the Samaritans, who had been greatly moved by the report which had reached them, were on their way to the well and in full view of Jesus and the twelve. His words have a reference to natural and to spiritual things. He speaks of the harvest of the earth and of the harvest of souls. The movement in Sychar produced by one reporter of the truth, and the eagerness of the people to see the Messiah, and hear him for themselves, were clear indications that the hour had

come to put in the sickle and reap. Here were minds ready to catch the first news from another world, ready to receive the truth, ready to enter the kingdom—needing just at this time the Gospel of the grace of God. They were like the field of grain which has lost its deep green in a yellow or whitish tinge that denotes it ripe and ready for the reaper. Without doubt, these words of our Saviour had a far more extended application than this. The *fields* were white. We need only remind ourselves of the impressions made by the ministry of John and of Jesus—the multitudes who flocked from far and near to hear them, and connect with this the progress the Gospel made in the life-time and by the labours of the apostles, and, yet further, remember the slight hold the pagan religion and philosophy then had upon the common mind, to assure ourselves that this statement of Jesus had, at that time, a world-wide application. From Samaria to the uttermost parts of the earth the fields were white to the harvest. There was a state of readiness for the Gospel—a state of things which invited the efforts that were now set on foot for giving to all nations the truth which saves the soul.

The words of our Saviour admit of repetition at this day, and they invite our attention to that state of things which warrants their use now, even as when they first fell from the lips of the Saviour. "Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

1. The world is open to the efforts which the Church is disposed to make to evangelize it.

To begin with our own land. The Church has con-

stant access to all the varied population that find a home under our government. Infidelity, superstition, and ignorance form no such barriers as exclude the approaches of truth. They who have the truth may labour for its propagation among all classes—upwards to the highest, and downwards to the lowest, commencing at the earliest age, and pursuing the work till the evening of life. The unbelieving are accessible. Romanists who come flocking to our shores from many lands are within reach. The Indians, who occupied the soil before us, are our neighbours, and when we will we may do them good. More than three millions of Africans, in a state of bondage among us, invite our efforts to show them the way of salvation. The way has been opened to the shores of the Pacific: vast tracts upwards to the Frigid Zone, are open to the Gospel, nor is there serious hindrance to our sending it into the States of the great Southern division of our continent.

Not less wonderful have been the ways of Providence in throwing open of late the old world, from many parts of which, till recently, the truth and its teacher were carefully excluded. From the North, South, East and West, Africa is open—is entered by those whose business it is to make known the way of life. The different States of Europe, many of which were, till recently, closed against the light of the Gospel, are now open. The word of God has entrance into all of them, and in nearly all it has free course. Even in the different departments of Italy, it is, within the last year, obtaining free circulation. For some years the Missionary has been pushing his way from province to province through the Turkish Empire. The Bible

distributer is in Russia. India may be traversed by the living teacher of true religion. Of China and Japan, we may say, "He hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the gates of iron in sunder." They also who have dwelt alone on the Islands of the sea, are no longer shut away and no longer exclude themselves from the evangelizing labours of the Church of Christ.

2. The intercourse which has arisen and is extending and becoming universal, is another feature of the present state of things which indicates a fit season for the spread of the Gospel.

During the present season our land has been filled with excitement by the arrival among us, of ambassadors with a large retinue from Japan, whose business it was to have a treaty of peace and of commerce ratified between the Government of that ancient Empire, and our own. From the opposite sides of the globe, the hand of friendship is extended and embraced, and nations pledge themselves to respect each other's rights, and live together in peace. This is but an illustration of what is taking place over all the earth. An intercourse is springing up between the different branches of the human family, which is becoming regular and closer every year. There is an irresistible tendency to extend it. Maritime nations are moving — are moved in this direction by forces they cannot control. In this way, men the most unlike are growing acquainted: men whose speech is strange to one another are holding intercourse together; and though at first it may be only of material things, the result must be the interchange of ideas on all subjects. It would be

an instructive study to follow the vessels which leave the harbours of New York or Liverpool, and mark the points at which they stop, and the people with whom they have intercourse, hear the information which is given and received, witness the impressions that are made, and note the ties which are formed. The first movement may proceed from the stimulus of trade: there may be nothing more in view than the profits of business, and yet who does not see that this is the least of what is accomplished? The acquaintance which is thus formed, the intercourse which is now established, and the friendly relations which may spring up, do all look to vastly more important ends than material gains. In doing something for himself, man has unwittingly done more for his Maker: for what see we in all this, but the making ready an highway for the chariot of salvation? What is there to prevent the entrance of the Gospel wherever this preparatory process is complete, or wherever it is going on? He who commands or mans the vessel, may be the servant of Jesus, and make his salvation known. This leads us to observe:

3. The new uses to which all material and human appliances are put in our own times. How numerous and powerful these are, we need not attempt to describe: but we are greatly impressed with the fact that they are subserving more and more effectually the higher uses of the Gospel. Look at the arts, and for illustration, select those by which man acts most directly and extensively upon the world at large. There is the art of War. The advances in this are, probably, not surpassed by the advances made in any other department of art. And among the doings of the won-

der-working God, we know of nothing more astonishing in our own times, than the facility and extent to which he has turned this art to his own account. If in the outbreakings of passion in earlier times, it was true that he made the wrath of man to praise him, while the remainder of wrath he restrained, it is emphatically and wonderfully true of the conflicts of these last days. The Crimean war, which drew together the forces of the mightiest nations of Europe, ended not in the aggrandizement of any of those great powers, but it secured the respect of the Turk for the Christian, and an entrance for the Gospel into that vast Empire. What must be said of the contests of Britain for the ascendency in India and China? However little sympathy we may have with the motives of the assailant, the fact is plain that the God of battles used the sword and overruled the designs of men, to make a way for himself, and the diffusion of the blessings of the Gospel among the teeming millions who had shut themselves out from the light, and upon whom Satan had barred every door. We recur to the war our own government lately carried on in Mexico, and whatever judgment we may form of the parties in the strife, the result is that a great and effectual door for the Gospel has, in this way, been opened, and the Lord is making the whole land his own. Turn, yet again, to the last European struggle between the French supporting the Sardinians, and the Austrians, and what do we witness so distinctly as this—the Lord opens a free passage for his word among many millions of people who could not be reached before?

Again, look at the art of Navigation. The use of

the mariner's compass, is a discovery of modern times. Its application to the art of navigation has developed this art so as to make it almost new. Without fear men traverse every sea. The introduction of steam, and its application to the same art, have rendered commerce next to the leading business of mankind. And now what do we witness? Besides the intercourse which is springing up among mankind in all parts of the earth, business ties and ties of friendship are being formed among men in all latitudes. The productions of one clime are becoming a necessary of life in every other clime. The manners and customs, institutions and laws, of any branch of the human family are becoming known to every other branch of it, and a reciprocal influence is going forth constantly from man to man, the tendency of which, and the result of which is to give the dominion to the mighty—might not being found in material strength, but in right as the Gospel reveals and developes this. Most assuredly in this way, the Lord is opening an highway for himself through all the earth. He is bringing every section of the human family within the range of the direct action of the word of truth.

And once more, in our art of Printing, we have a method of communicating thought—a method by which the impression may be multiplied and extended indefinitely. It is a mighty power in the hands of man. We associate it with the purpose God has announced of making the contents of his revelation universally known. And when we observe the use to which the mind he has sanctified is putting it, we cannot but regard it as summoned into existence to subserve his

designs, and fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

Thus is he giving this new direction to our arts—converting them to his own uses, and, by the hands, both of such as fear Him, and of others who know not what they do, paving the way for his own progress as King of righteousness, when the time comes for him to take to himself his great power and reign.

We have referred to the arts; let us make a single reference to Science. The same thing is true of it as of the arts. Where is science at this day? In whose keeping? It has changed hands since the day the apostle Paul stood on Mars' Hill, surrounded by the noblest works of art, and the brightest lights of science. At that time science was among the Greeks and Romans. It was not with the Jews, nor in the Church of Christ. But where is it now? It is in the keeping of, those who have, and who make the freest use of the word of God. Without denying to the people of the East all the attainments and all the skill they may claim, it is but the plain matter of fact that the people to whom God has now intrusted his truth are qualified to be the instructers of all nations, in all matters of science. We are not ignorant of the power which knowledge—even secular and scientific—gives, and it is not without satisfaction, which we are at no pains to conceal, that we find this power, whatever it may be, now committed to those whose business it is to make known the way of the Lord upon the earth, and his saving health among all nations.

There is something in the use to which these, with all human appliances, are being put, which is calculated

to attract attention and inspire hope. Man is still alienated from the life of God, and yet he is moved to employ his talents in a way that furthers the designs of his Maker. We see it, and feel that we are moving forward to the grand events delineated by prophecy. The artisans and labourers of the King of Tyre gave their skill and labour in preparing materials for a temple they did not build, and in which they did not worship. So now does Israel's God lay under contribution the intellect and energies of man, not only with, but without an interest in his grace, for completing the preparation to establish his kingdom over all the earth.

4. Opposition to the progress of the Gospel has given way to a very remarkable extent.

When the apostles began to preach, it would have been difficult to have named a place where it would not have been opposed: now it is quite as difficult to name a place where it will be met by opposition. Then even an apostle, if he entered the synagogue in any city of the Roman Empire, might expect to confront those who would oppose and blaspheme. If he stood among the Pagans in Antioch, or in any place between that and Athens, or Rome, and attempted to speak of Jesus and the resurrection, he had every reason to expect to find himself treated with insult, and his doctrine with derision. Then the loss of all things with bonds and imprisonment, yea, death was the reward they received for their labour of love. Nor did opposition cease suddenly with their death: it increased and became more violent as the number of believers increased: it took the form of persecution,

open and general, conducted by the government, and it was against such opposition, the followers of Jesus had to contend till the field was won. How often, after Pagan Rome had disappeared, did it break out! The history of the propagation of the pure Gospel among men, has been a history of the manifestation of the deadliest enmity the human heart has ever exhibited; nor need we travel far back to witness the terrible reality. In the burying ground of the old Grey Friars Church, Edinburgh, is a large tablet, bearing the inscription, "From May 27, 1661, that the most noble Marquis of Argyle suffered, to the 17th February, 1668, that Mr. James Renwick suffered, were executed at Edinburgh, about one hundred of noblemen, gentlemen, ministers, and others, noble martyrs for Jesus Christ: the most part of them lie here." Since that date, persecution has raged, and it is only of late the world has fallen upon such times as we witness, when men may believe the truth and give themselves to disseminate it without fear of harm. Away through the heathen world with scarcely an exception, the opposition which the friends of the Gospel encountered—an opposition so determined as to shut them out of these lands, has died away. The world that lieth in wickedness may not love the truth, but somehow its power to oppose its progress, as once it did, is taken away. This is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes—for it has been brought about by silent influences we cannot control nor even fully trace.

5. There are remarkable movements in society, which favour the spread of the truth.

How grand a movement is that among the stagnant millions of China, named the Rebellion, which is wonderful to us, not so much as an effort to overturn an existing government, as a measure for diffusing through the minds of that people, new ideas more akin to revealed truth. The change too which has taken place in Japan, which opens that people to the influence of Western mind—a people who till just now were secluded from that influence, is another movement which prepares the way for the diffusion of saving truth among them. But nowhere have the movements of which we speak, been more remarkable than in the countries of Papal Europe. Sardinia claimed freedom, and, by the aid of France, won it: one after another of the Italian States struck for the same right: they became free, and instantly thirteen millions of the vassals of the Pope became accessible to the Gospel, and invite the free circulation of the Holy Scriptures. Austria was moved, and the bigotted head of that government, who, through a concordat with the Papal government a few years since, became the oppressor of his Protestant subjects, has been forced to make such concessions as restore their rights, and allow them the enjoyment of their privileges in the Church of their choice, which involves the opportunity to publish the truth. The fact is calculated to impress us deeply, that these movements, which originate in the bosom of society, and from a hidden source, and in which the ostensible design is quite aside from the spiritual progress of the body affected, should acquire this tendency upward. That they are spontaneous, and occur in bodies which are not easily approached

or influenced from without, while they are proving so thorough, and have the effect of opening a way for the free access of the Gospel, is equally remarkable, and reminds us of the words of prophecy, once fulfilled, and yet again to be more perfectly accomplished, "I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come."

6. Ancient systems of error are not making progress, but rather are in a state of decay. We would guard against making a wrong impression on this point. The heathen are in error still. Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people. Yet is it sadly true—

> "The heathen in his blindness
> Bows down to wood and stone."

Nor is the Apocalyptic beast yet slain; it has only received a deadly wound. This, however, we do and may safely say—The power of superstition is not what it once was. Fixing our attention upon the most extensive and advanced of heathen nations, this is manifest. The government of Japan forbade a Christian to set foot upon its soil under pain of death; it also forbade a native who might go abroad to a Christian land, ever to return to his own home, under the same penalty. Now we have communication with that people. The state of things as reported to us is this: They have two Emperors; the one, the head of the State, the other, the spiritual head of the people. At present the latter is but "the mere shadow of an Emperor, the representative of a traditionary and obsolete system." He has been styled a Pope without a

see. Among these people, as among the Chinese, scepticism is the predominant influence. No disposition have they to embrace the Gospel, but the system of idolatry has not at present its original hold of the public mind. What is true of them, is substantially true of the Chinese, of which we have the satisfactory evidence which has been furnished by the rebels, as they are called, embracing some millions of people, who have openly renounced the ancient idolatrous worship, and now recognize the God of the Bible. In India, very remarkable changes have taken place within our recollection. Death is no longer the penalty incurred, by embracing the Christian faith. Not that the Hindoos have lost their reverence for their idols, or ceased to maintain their own worship, but the Gospel has made such progress that families and communities of Christians, composed of converts from Hindooism, are allowed to live and enjoy their worship without molestation. The Turkish Empire is remarkable only for the signs of decay. The time was when a Mohammedan could become a Christian only at the cost of his life. By an enactment of the present Sultan, that law, though a law of the Koran, which prescribes such punishment to the apostate, has become a dead letter. He has given a pledge that no man should suffer persecution because of a change in his religious views; and the baptized Mussulman goes about unharmed. The outbreak and frightful massacre of native Christians in Syria, the present season, may serve to show us that the original venom still inheres in the system of Mohammed, yet we doubt not the result will make still more distinct the decrepitude of that system which

once possessed such remarkable vigour. The same remark applies to Romanism. Men, common people, no longer tremble at the anathemas which issue from the Vatican, as Kings once did. They are heard, perhaps; but how few pay very serious attention to them! Not because there is not faith, and greater faith in God and his truth, but because faith in the Pope is less and constantly diminishing.

To us it is not a little remarkable—we do regard it as a holy ordering of Divine Providence—that this change, which is of such importance in its bearings, should be going on simultaneously among people, and under circumstances so different. To our minds it has the appearance of a manifest preparation for the great things which the Lord of the harvest has promised to do. It occupies no insignificant place in that state of things which warrants the language, "The fields are white already to harvest."

7. The ready entrance the Gospel is gaining in so many quarters, is a circumstance which is not to be overlooked.

The success which has attended the Missionary efforts of modern times, exceeds the expectations we had a right to form. This is a theme by itself; and we can name only a few facts in illustration. A Russian Consul was sent to England to reside. He took two servants, a man and a woman, both of whom were brought to the saving knowledge of the truth. When they returned to Russia, they left his service. The man, a tailor by trade, was an active Christian, and exhorted as he had opportunity. He taught young men the way of life, and they again employed them-

selves for Jesus. Persecution followed: Metrejeff, before the Crimean war broke out, was himself banished to Siberia. But what is the result? His followers occupy no less than thirty villages, and number not less than one million of souls. At length persecution has ceased: they grew, and with them the knowledge of the truth is extending. The way is no sooner opened for it to enter Italy, than we are permitted to read such accounts as these: In every bookstore and bookstall in the city (Florence), some edition of the Bible is found for sale, and every evening there meets a society of Italians for the study of the Scriptures; on Sabbath, the number is not less than five hundred, and on week-days, as many as two hundred. We are told, that there are whole villages which are recognized as Protestant villages. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise. He has said of his word, "It shall not return unto me void," and it seems as though no effort on our part to spread it, no accident of ours, by which it may be spread, is overlooked by him. About sixteen years ago, four Armenian Testaments were left at Agutab—from that time, and from that cause, the word of the Lord grew and prevailed there, until the number of believers in the city is one thousand and four hundred; there is a Sabbath-school attendance of one thousand, besides children. Evangelical books and tracts have been circulating in Sweden, a few years, against the wishes of an ignorant and irreligious clergy; the result is a great awakening to eternal things. The Gospel is carried to the Greenlanders, and to those who dwell in the South-sea Islands, and it works with its wonted power, turning

many, and these among the most debased of our race, to righteousness. This circumstance is full of encouragement; in it we see the field over all its length and breadth whitening, and giving signs that the time of harvest is come.

8. Observe the mighty and extended movement of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of men, leading them to the obedience of Christ.

In our own land it is estimated that not less than half a million of souls have, during the recent manifestations of the Divine presence, yielded themselves to the claims of the Saviour. The like mighty power has attended the Gospel in Ireland, extending also to Scotland, England, Wales, and the Isle of Man, with other islands around the shores of Britain. In Sweden, between four and five hundred of the clergy have been brought to the knowledge of the truth, out of a body of ministers who knew almost nothing of spiritual religion. Within the same period—the last two years—not less than two hundred and fifty thousand souls have been, to appearance, savingly enlightened. Only six months ago, it could be said, a powerful religious movement is taking place in the north part of Bohemia, where whole villages are going over to Protestantism." But recently, in the Island of Celebes, where the Netherlands' Missionary Society had been prosecuting their work for years with but little success, one of the Missionaries, on his way to his preaching station, was met by a heathen priest with a crowd about him, who informed the Missionary, that he and his people had resolved to renounce idolatry and become Christians. This movement spread from village to

village, the people casting away their idols, and desiring to be instructed in the way of life. The chief means of bringing them to Christ, was the instruction their children had received in the Sabbath-school. The work was general, extending to the thousands who inhabited the island. In the colony at South Australia, in 1859, "the power of the truth was such that men could not work in the mine by day, nor women rest in their homes. Not less than five hundred were brought to confess Christ. We ought not to omit in this connection the extraordinary display of sovereign grace in the French colony in Illinois, in which a Romish priest, being first quickened by the Divine Spirit, became the instrument of leading hundreds to place their hope in Christ.

These are examples of what God the Spirit is doing in our own times. They show that, if the Apostolic age has gone never to return, the demonstration of the Spirit and the power which then attended the truth still remain. The same invisible yet mighty One, who introduced the reign of grace amid pentecostal scenes, makes it known that he is ready, amid scenes more wonderful than these, to usher in the latter-day glory. Now even as of old, the truth proves its capacity for nurturing the highest style of virtue, and putting its chief adornment upon the most cultivated society, and fulfilling the most important ministry in a community which may be farthest in advance of the general condition of our race, even stimulating and guiding it to great and noble efforts to redeem the less favoured, from the manifold degradation of sin; it also proves itself mighty for pulling down the strong holds of sin

everywhere, moving with an energy and success not in the least abated from the apostolic age, in every community and in every clime, in all stages of moral and mental deterioration down to the most savage. What conclusion do these facts force upon us but this—the field, which is the world, is now white and all of it ready for the harvest?

When the aged Simeon saw the infant Saviour, and took him in his arms, he blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." He had seen enough, he was made sure of the future, and was satisfied with the goodness of the Lord's house. Is it not a matter of joyfulness that life is given to us in these times, when God the Spirit gives us such assurances that he dwells with man upon the earth, and that the world is on the eve or in the midst of these events which shall for ever signalize the triumphs of Jesus over all his foes, and make his Church the joy and glory of the whole earth?

And now, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields." It is Jesus who calls your attention. You who have engaged yourselves to him, and are looking to him to appoint your work, fix your eyes upon that state of things his providence and truth have brought about. Do you need instruction about what is to be done, and what you may attempt? Here he gives it. Do you need an invitation and urging? You have both from him. Do you need encouragement? He gives it. Do you need a powerful motive which shall act as a constant stimulus to keep your energies employed without abatement during all the period of your

service, and overcome your tendencies to sloth and discouragement? then follow the finger of your beloved Lord, as he points out one portion of the field after another, and shows you as he proceeds that it is white already to harvest. Jesus would gain something from you and for you. Perhaps your thoughts have been but newly directed to him, and you yet have the dew of your youth, then it may be he is describing the state of the field to you, that he may see whether there be in you a mind ready for his work—whether his cause lies so near your heart, that you may feel yourself moved by what he shows you, to leave all and devote your whole life to the single work of making his salvation known. It will be wise to fix your eyes upon the field, and ponder what is before you, till you comprehend the question, what he would have you do, and answer it in full view of that day when the angel-reapers shall come forth to gather the wheat into the garner of God. The majority of you are necessarily employed otherwise at present than as the commissioned Ambassadors of Christ: yet your interest in the spectacle Jesus places before you, is not exceeded by that of any other class. It is yours to open your hearts to the great impressions Jesus would make, touching the things of the kingdom, by the inviting state of the field at the present time. You, too, may engage directly in this greatest work, and press it forward with all your means and strength. As you gaze upon the whitening fields, the scene will put life and importunity into your prayer, that the Lord of the harvest would send forth labourers into his harvest. From the spot you occupy, be it ever so exalted or

ever so humble, your wonder-working Saviour has so ordered it, that you can operate upon any part of the vast field to which your inclination may lead you. Such grace is given you, through the new and marvellous power of association, that your efforts and means may be employed any where, at your option, in carrying forward the merciful purposes of Jesus.

The object of our discourse is gained, if our hearts find a more perfect rest in the cross; if from this point we obtain a clearer survey of our Saviour's designs, and our souls become so imbued with that Spirit which brought him to serve us, that by labour as by prayer, we may evermore say—Thy Kingdom Come.

No. 249.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF GIVING.

BY P. D. GURLEY, D. D.

ACTS xx. 35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

THESE are the words of the Lord Jesus. They breathe the very spirit of his own life and doctrine. They are not recorded in either of the four Gospels; but Paul quotes them in his touching address to the Elders at Ephesus, as words with which they were familiar, and which it was well understood were the very words of the Master. As he pursued his mission of love, and "went about doing good," it may have been his habit to say very often to those around him, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." At any rate, if this was not one of his oft-repeated sayings, it was certainly one of his most precious sayings; and it seems even to have a peculiar value from the fact that it is not recorded in the regular and professed histories of his life. Some one has said, "It comes to us recovered, as it were, from the great mass of his unrecorded sayings; rescued from that oblivion to which it was hastening if left to mere tradition, and placed in permanent form in the sacred writings by the act of an Apostle who had never seen the Saviour before his crucifixion." It is a precious relic, a truly and deeply touching memento of him who loved us and gave himself for us; and the effect of it is to make us almost regret that more of his "gracious words" were not recovered in like manner from an uncertain tradition,

and put upon record by the pen of inspiration. Why the number is so limited is known only to God. To that inquiry we can but say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." But let us be thankful that this saying was recorded before the sacred canon closed; and let us be assured that it was written for our good, and deserves our most earnest and prayerful consideration.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Surely this is a great and a noble utterance. It is worthy of the Son of God, and coming from him, it is surpassingly impressive, inasmuch as it exhibits the great principle upon which he acts as our Redeemer. Touched by the sight of our ruin, he leaves the throne of his glory and the bosom of his Father that he may provide for our salvation. For our sakes he takes upon him the form of a servant, and is made in the likeness of men. For our sakes he becomes "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." In lowliness, and poverty, and suffering, he devotes himself to our immortal interests. He assumes our legal liabilities, and becomes our substitute and surety. He is wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. At the expense of his own precious blood and life, he atones for our offences, secures for us the favour of God, and opens to us the gates of Paradise; and when with blended gratitude and amazement, we inquire for the principle which governs him in all this benevolent and self-sacrificing mission, the response he gives us is, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Verily that response is the key to his own wonderful career and achievements, as the Word made flesh and dwelling among us, "full of grace and truth;" and

while it is an explanation of his own conduct as our Redeemer, it is also a lesson to us. It says: "If you would be my followers, you must live and act under the sway of benevolence; you must esteem it a greater privilege to give than to receive; you must seek your own highest happiness in promoting the happiness of others." Such a lesson from such a source, such a lesson enforced by such an example, may well arrest our attention. When he who receives the homage of cherubim and seraphim in the highest heavens comes down to this dark and distant world, and gives himself to shame and death, a ransom for sinners; and when, in the very act of doing this, he addresses us in the words of the text, and says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" then certainly it becomes us to pause and ponder the declaration, that we may learn from it that our highest interest and our happiness are to be found, not in hoarding the gifts of providence and grace, as though they were designed exclusively for our own benefit, but in using and dispensing them for the benefit of others.

Let us consider some of the reasons why "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

1. Giving assimilates us to God. As he is our Creator, so he is our constant and most bountiful Benefactor. Of all benefactors he is the greatest and the best. It is his delight to make his creatures happy; and if they fail of happiness, it is because they reject his counsel and depart from his ways. All his works of creation and providence are but the outflowings of his goodness. Life and health, food and raiment, relatives and friends, family and home, everything that is pleasant in our earthly lot, or pro-

mising in our earthly prospects, we receive from him. Where is there a blessing of which he is not the source? Where is there a spot or a turn in all our past history which is not radiant with the displays of his mercy? When comes the hour or the moment to any of us in which we are not the objects of his care and the recipients of his bounty? Surely these are suggestive inquiries. They suggest our constant, and unmeasured, and unutterable indebtedness to the God that made and preserves us. We have never seen an end of his goodness. His mercies are new every morning. They descend upon us unceasingly. The stream is always flowing and always full. The Fountain never fails. He who sitteth in the heavens, and with whom is infinite fulness, never grows weary in doing us good. He gives, and we receive—this is the story of our daily life. And when we look away from ourselves, we see that he sustains the same relation to others—the relation of a constant and untiring Benefactor. The earth is full of his goodness. He gives to all and receives from none. So true is it that the best and the happiest Being in the universe is he who is ever engaged in dispensing happiness to his creatures. The greatest Possessor is the greatest Giver. Giving is his distinguishing glory. The most attractive and deeply affecting manifestation of his whole character recorded in the annals of time, is in the form of a gift. The touching and ever-memorable record is, that he "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." It is not without reason, therefore, that we say, giving assimilates us to him. It is when we live, not for ourselves, but for the good of others, that our characters

are most nearly conformed to his. And if we aim and desire to be more like him than we are, then "to do good and to communicate" we must not forget, but, on the contrary, we must remember and lay to our hearts the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Blessed to give!—how blessed? It brings us nearer to the image and to the happiness of God.

2. Giving improves our characters by increasing our benevolence. It is an evident and a familiar principle that our virtues and our vices alike are invigorated by use, and weakened by disuse. They grow when they are frequently gratified; they dwindle when they are frequently repressed. This is as true of our desire to do good, to augment the welfare of our fellow-men, as of any other propensity. Benevolent feeling gratified is benevolent feeling increased; and, on the other hand, benevolent feeling ungratified is benevolent feeling diminished. The man whose great ambition is to receive, to accumulate, and who always forgets or refuses to give, is a man modelled after the narrowest pattern. He dwarfs himself by persistently stifling in his bosom every element of greatness. He gets smaller and smaller with the lapse of time. He lives in the smallest habitation that ever held and smothered a human soul—the cell of supreme selfishness. He does nothing beyond the limited circle where his own petty interests revolve, and, at length, the fact of his prolonged existence becomes a problem admitting of but one solution, and that is, that God spares him as a monument of his displeasure, a beacon and a warning to all the passers-by, sending out the perpetual admonition, "So fares the man who lives for himself alone

—who receives but never gives." But how is it with him who yields to the promptings of benevolence—whose ear is ever heedful of the cry of the needy, and whose hand is ever ready to open for their relief—the man who receives the blessings of heaven not merely for himself, but that he may use them for the good of others? How his heart enlarges just in proportion to the frequency and the freeness of his gifts! The more he does for humanity, the more he loves to do. The oftener his sympathies flow, the more pure and vigorous do they become. He was always a lovely character, it may be, but in devoting himself from day to day to some new work and labour of mercy, the lustre of his life increases. He goes from strength to strength. His attractions are numerous, his influence is salutary, and the space he fills is large. The world is manifestly the better and not the worse for his being in it. When the ear hears him, then it blesses him; and when the eye sees him, it gives witness to him; because he delivers the poor that crieth, and the fatherless, and him that hath none to help him. The blessing of him that is ready to perish comes upon him; and he causes the widow's heart to sing for joy. Contrast these two characters as you see them every day in society; the man who receives to hoard, and the man who receives to distribute—the man who lives to centre everything upon himself, and the man who lives to help and bless his fellows;—contrast the two. Look at the noble, unselfish spirit of the one, and at the narrow, contracted spirit of the other; look at the loveliness of the one, and at the odiousness of the other; at the growing beauty of the one, and the growing deformity of the other—and then, perhaps,

you will see a deeper meaning than ever you have seen before in those words of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Blessed to give!—and why blessed? Because giving enlarges the heart, strengthens within us the principle of benevolence, and thereby prepares us for the society and the employments of that better world, where "all the air is love."

3. Again: giving is a source of happiness—happiness true and pure. There is such a thing as "the luxury of doing good." Many, if not all, of the readers of this tract have found it, felt it, and if so, then you know it to be very great. Perhaps you have met a family in distress. Your heart was moved as you saw them struggling with poverty and sickness. Once and again you visited them in their affliction, and ministered to their comfort. You watched by the side of the sick and dying one. You smoothed the dying pillow. You opened your purse and supplied the many, many wants that met your eye and pained your heart in that narrow and lowly habitation. You continued to do so for days and weeks, it may be, till the stress of suffering was past, and you saw that your sympathy and alms were needed there no more. Is there any such chapter as this in the book of your earthly history? It is to be hoped there are many; but if there is one, then we may confidently ask, Were you not happy in performing that labour of love? Was it not a joy, full and unspeakable, which you felt, as you went forth from day to day to perform your errand of mercy? And then the memory of that mission—Oh, how pleasant it is! You love to think of it. It will always be a bright and gladsome recollec-

tion. It is one of the things the remembrance of which will plant no thorn in your dying pillow. On the contrary, from the bed of languishing you will revert to it with satisfaction, and your only regret will be that the whole line of your earthly life has not been brightened and beautified with similar deeds of charity. Or, perhaps, you have won a soul to Christ. You had an impenitent neighbour. Your spirit was troubled when you thought of his guilt and danger; and you determined to spare no effort if you might but lead him to the Saviour. You gave him your counsels and your prayers. You approached him again and again, and besought him in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. At last your prayers were answered; your efforts were crowned with success; the heart of that neighbour relented; he bowed at the foot of the cross; and you were permitted to hail him as an heir with you of the grace of life. That was a precious and a blessed moment in your history. Yours then was the joy of one who feels that he has saved a soul from death. And now, as you see that man standing boldly up for Jesus, leading his family morning and evening to the altar of devotion, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, throwing the whole weight of his influence into the right scale, and leading others around him to the Saviour—as you think of these things, and then see the tear of gratitude that glistens in his eye as he grasps your hand and says, "You, under God, have plucked my soul from ruin;"—then, then, if ever you feel a happiness akin to the happiness of God and his Christ, and then you can understand what a fulness of meaning there was in the words of the Lord Jesus

when he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

4. Again: giving brings us within the range of many exceeding great and precious promises. It is wonderful what rich and priceless blessings God has engaged to bestow upon those who are true to the claims of humanity, and devote their worldly possessions largely and liberally to the advancement of the cause of benevolence. Let us refresh our memories by recurring to a few plain and pointed passages, which may be regarded as accurately indicating the whole scope of scriptural teaching upon this momentous subject. "Trust in the Lord, and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: and the Lord shall guide thee con-

tinually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." Surely these are exceeding great and precious promises. Giving to the needy with a cheerful heart and a bountiful hand brings us within the range of these promises, meets the terms upon which their fulfilment is suspended, and thereby secures to us the enriching benefits of which they speak, and which they hold up before us as a dissuasive from avarice and a motive to liberality. Nor let it be forgotten, that on the last great day, when a trembling world shall stand before its Judge to receive according to the deeds done here in the body, he who sits upon the throne will say unto them on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat:"—Oh how the grace of giving, of liberality, will then be magnified!—"I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." And when the righteous, amazed that the Judge should represent himself as having been the recipient of their beneficence, shall ask, "When saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? —when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee?" His touching and deeply significant response will be, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Ah, then, assuredly, we shall never doubt again—though many a time we seem

to doubt it now—that under the government of our redeeming God, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." More blessed to give—and why? Because, while the act itself assimilates us to God, improves our characters, and gives us the truest enjoyment, in the promise and purpose of Jehovah-Jesus, there is a reward connected with it, and that reward will be glorious and everlasting.

5. Again: giving is, in an important sense, the moral and spiritual life of the world. Suppose the great company of those who give of their substance for the spread of the gospel and the deliverance of men from darkness, suffering, and degradation, were to stay their hands and give no more. What would be the result? Can any tongue or pen describe it? Is it in the power of language adequately to set forth the sudden and awful paralysis that would come upon all those benevolent agencies that are now diffusing light, and joy, and blessing among the nations? It would be like quenching, in a moment, the last and dearest hopes of humanity. Our foreign missionaries would be recalled for the want of support. Our mission schools, and stations, and presses would be abandoned. The whole work of pagan evangelization would cease; and the millions of perishing heathen would be left to their idols and their debasement, with none to point them to the Saviour. The waste places in our own country would become doubly waste, because our domestic missionaries, a noble band, would either die at their posts for the lack of bread, or turn to secular employments for a livelihood. The religious press, that engine of power and mercy, would be crippled; our tract and Bible houses would be closed; our col-

porteurs would be obliged to resign their commissions and leave their labour of love; our pulpits would become vacant; all our charitable institutions would go down; and all the streams of heavenly influence that are now flowing forth in so many directions for the enlightenment, the relief, and the salvation of a dying world, would be dried at their very fountain. Surely this is a sad, dark picture; but if there were to be no more giving, it would very soon be realized. This is obvious enough. And so we are not mistaken when we say that giving is, in an important sense, the moral and spiritual life of the world. It is the great spring and promoter of progress. It always has been, and it always will be. Such is the economy of our redeeming God. Look at the Sandwich Islands—saved from idolatry and its concomitant pollutions, and lifted to the dignity and privileges of a Christian nation. What did it? The gifts of God's people. See the lights of Christianity here and there, as they are burning brightly and beautifully to-day on the dark shores of heathenism. What kindled them? The gifts of God's people. See those self-denying and true-hearted embassadors of God, who, under the pressure of many toils and privations, are preaching Christ in the dark and destitute regions of our own country. What sustains them there? The gifts of God's people. See these churches, thousands upon thousands, scattered through the length and breadth of the land; and these ministers of the gospel, preaching from Sabbath to Sabbath the unsearchable riches of Christ; and these Bible, tract, and Sunday-school societies, diffusing far and wide the leaves of the tree of life for the healing of the nations; and all the multiplied instrumentalities

by which light is diffused, suffering is relieved, character is elevated, and souls are prepared for heaven. What built these churches? What supports these ministers? What sustains and keeps in motion all these great and benevolent and wonder-working agencies? Gifts, gifts, gifts—free-will offerings, love offerings, coming, for the most part, from those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and who "remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." When you can estimate the value of all these various agencies; when you can measure their glorious results as they shall one day be seen in the conversion of the world, and in the eternal salvation of uncounted myriads of precious souls,—then, but not till then, can you know and tell what a blessed thing it is to give.

In view of these considerations, ye disciples and friends of the Saviour, we feel no delicacy in asking you earnestly and often to give of your substance for the sustentation and advancement of the various objects of Christian benevolence. We tell you plainly that giving to these objects, as God has prospered you, is more than a duty—it is a privilege—a great and inestimable privilege. It is blessed to give—more blessed than to receive. It is a part of the mission of the ministers of Christ, to remind you of this—if need be, to convince you of this—and such, in this tract, is our sole and simple purpose. We do not hesitate to extend very often to those who wait upon our ministry the opportunity of showing their love to the Saviour by contributing of their substance for the advancement of his kingdom. We believe this is according to his will. In this matter we

endeavour to act both conscientiously and carefully. We knowingly permit no objects to be urged upon you whose claims are even doubtful; no objects of which we cannot say, with perfect confidence, We know that they are worthy. And when such objects are presented, then what we ask is, that you will remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Give freely, because you have received freely, and because it is for him who loved you and gave HIMSELF for you. Give cheerfully, for God loveth a cheerful giver. Give according to your ability, for he requireth of us according to that we have. Give steadily, regularly, systematically, because this is the Scriptural method, (1 Cor. xvi. 2,) and it produces the largest results. Remember it is to your own advantage to be a frequent and a liberal giver. It assimilates you to God; it strengthens your benevolence; it promotes your happiness; it furnishes pleasant recollections for a dying hour; it secures to you the fulfilment of many precious promises; and it prepares you for a great reward in heaven. Try to do something for every good cause. Said Dr. Finley to an agent who asked him for a contribution to the particular object for which he was pleading, "I have but little to give; but I consider it a privilege and an honour, so far as the Lord allows, to have something, if it be but a single nail, in every edifice that is going up for Christ." That's the spirit which the Master would have you to possess and to cultivate. Many edifices are being built for him in our day; many noble and benevolent enterprises are planned and prosecuted for his glory. We bless him that it is so. Invest as much as you can in them all. It is

the best investment you can make, and, in the end, it will bring you the largest returns. Other investments may prove a failure, but what you give to the Redeemer is safe. When he comes to reckon with his servants he will remember it; from his judgment throne he will acknowledge it; and then, in his approving smile, in the welcome plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and in the bliss of heaven, holy, exalted, rapturous, and ineffable, you shall find your recompense and your reward.

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

Perhaps nothing in the world is a surer sign of littleness than a slavish imitation of any man. Men lose that which is an honour to them, individuality, and then they lose that which is power to them, originality, the moment they commence walking in another man's track. When one painter slavishly copies another, he is only known as the satellite of a great luminary; he himself is neither respectable nor respected. But this is not the case when men select models which are confessed to be perfect. You never hear a man accused of a want of originality because he studies the models in sculpture of ancient Greece. It is not usual to hear the accusation of imitation brought against painters who have studiously examined the works of Michael Angelo and Raphael. These men are put at the head of their respective schools, and the following of these masters of the art is voted to be no folly, but true wisdom. 'Tis even so with the imitation of Christ. To imitate other men is weakness, to copy Christ is

strength. Christ is the perfection of manhood. He who should imitate him the most nearly, would be the most original man upon earth. It may seem a paradox, but it is one which nevertheless needs only to be tried to be proved; no man will be looked upon as so strange, so singular a being among his fellows, as the man who shall nearest approach to the image of the Lord Jesus. He imitates, we grant you; he copies, we confess it; but he is himself, despite his copying, an original to other men, and stands out from the common herd as being a distinguished and celebrated individual; he will be "known and read of all men." If I should stand here this morning, my hearers, to exhort you to imitate any one model in manhood except Christ, I should feel that I had a difficult task with sensible men. There is not in all the annals of our race, a single name which I could bid you love and reverence so much as to shut your eyes to the faults connected therewith. There is not a single biography truthfully written, which I would have you read, and then say, "I will re-live this man's life precisely as he lived it." You would make shipwreck, if you should blindly steer in the wake of the noblest of your brethren. You may take a virtue here, and a virtue there, and then in God's strength seek to imitate those men who excelled in those points; but to imitate an Abraham in all things would not make you an Abraham, nor would it make you what you should be. To seek to follow a Job in all respects would not bring you to be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. There remains but one model we can ever commend to you, and only one which a man of strong mind can accept as his copy in every jot and tittle.—C. H. SPURGEON.

No. 250.

A PLEA FOR SYMPATHY

IN BEHALF OF THE MINISTRY.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

BY THE REV. W. S. WHITE, D.D.

It was doubtless in view of the responsibilities and toils of the ministry of the gospel, that an inspired Apostle exclaimed, "Who is sufficient for these things?" And it was with the same view that the framers of our Book of Discipline inserted this among the questions to be propounded to the people, "Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labour, and to assist his endeavours for your instruction and spiritual edification?" To this question every member of the church, enjoying the spiritual oversight of a pastor, has given an affirmative answer. In God's house, and in his presence, having first called upon him in prayer, they have raised their hands and said, *I do.* There is fearful solemnity in such an attitude and such a vow. Is its meaning and force duly considered? The question referred to speaks of "arduous labour," and the answer given promises encouragement and assistance. Fully to meet the obligations assumed when this promise is given, the magnitude of the work should be better understood by those in whose behalf the ministry has been instituted. Be assured that all you promise is needed, and will be thankfully received.

"'Tis not a cause of small import,
The Pastor's care demands;
But what might fill an angel's heart,
And filled a Saviour's hands."

There is nothing which resembles this office in the ordinary employments of men. Man neither creates, nor does he, in his own name, confer it. The licensing and ordaining power, as it exists in the visible church, can never make a man an ambassador of Christ. This can only be done by him who alone is king in Zion. And when one is thus commissioned, it is to negotiate with man for God. It is a ministry of reconciliation, instructed and empowered to unfold and apply the truth of God. What he does, and what he teaches as the commissioned servant of Christ, respects the interests of three worlds—heaven, earth, and hell. All this implies the making known to men just what God has said in his word, and no more nor less. To add to or take from what that word teaches, is to expose himself to all the plagues that are written in that word. He must then explain the doctrines, enforce the duties, hold forth the invitations, and proclaim the threatenings, just as these are found in the Scriptures. He must not only illustrate and apply, but he must maintain and defend what God has said, as true, and wise, and good. If, as Christ's ambassador, he tolerates error either in faith or practice, he does it at the peril of his own soul. "So, thou son of man, I have set thee a watchman to the house of Israel; and if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand."

Along with these solemn thoughts, remember that your pastor is not an angel, nor is he possessed of infallibility. This gospel treasure is put into "earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." The best of ministers are but

men of like passions with others. They are called to contend with the same allurements, with the same evil hearts of unbelief, the same tendency to worldliness, pride, vanity, and sloth. They sustain the same relations, are under obligations to discharge the same relative and social duties that others are. In all these respects they do not differ materially from the humblest of their flock.

All the ordinary ills of life press upon them just as they do upon others. And besides all this, they have countless trials peculiar to themselves. They are forbidden to engage in many pursuits by which others rise, and secure wealth and power. They are peculiarly exposed to formality in their religious services. Their duties are stated, periodical, and official. When the appointed time arrives, they must attend church, let who will remain at home. They *must* preach, whatever the state of their religious affections may be. And they must so preach, as to instruct those who take no pains to instruct themselves, and to refresh and cheer those who are almost strangers to all private personal communion with God.

There are temptations, too, which are peculiar to his office. In the ministry of the Presbyterian church there is always found a respectable amount of learning, at least enough to elevate the minister in this respect above many of the best of his flock. And then the veneration in which the office is held by the masses of the people, both in and out of the church, tends to expose him to pride and vanity. And just so far as he falls into these sins, he loses all true enjoyment, ceases to be useful, and indeed becomes a blot and a hindrance to the cause of Christ. The great wisdom

of the Apostle Paul is evinced in his charging Timothy not to ordain a novice, or one recently converted, to the work of the ministry, "lest being puffed up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil." The temptation to preach so as to be admired of men, is preëminently the besetting sin of ministers—the hardest and the last to be overcome, and one which sometimes makes them, of all men, the most wicked and the most miserable.

Now with all these hindrances to their usefulness and their comfort, what do the people rightfully expect of them? Why, first of all, that they be truly pious—uniformly, habitually, progressively pious. The strength of their faith, and the fervour of their religious affections, must be such as to fit them for every emergency, every duty. The love of Christ must constantly burn in their hearts, with a flame so pure and bright that all shall see its lustre and feel its warmth.

In order to teach others, they must be well instructed in every department of learning, human and divine. This is needful, that they may not only teach those who desire to be taught, but also silence those who hate knowledge, and resist the truth. This will call them into regions of inquiry eminently unfitted to strengthen their faith or to inflame their zeal. Many of their studies must be intricate and abstruse, cold, critical, enticing, secular. They must be as familiar with the empty speculations and cynical sneers of the infidel, as they are with the lucid arguments of the ablest defenders of our holy religion.

Their official labours are various, complicated, and arduous. In their public ministrations they must secure variety; things new and old, simple and pro-

found, must be brought forth. Here gentleness must be blended with authority, the rigors of the law with the sweetness of the gospel. Mount Sinai and Calvary, the curse and the cross, must be exhibited in all their just proportions and mutual relations. Precepts and promises, invitations and threatenings, rewards and punishments, faith and works, justice and mercy, heaven and hell, must all occupy the place in the preacher's sermons that they occupy in the word of God. The minister must speak to the most promiscuous crowd, so as, at the same time, to alarm the secure, and yet not discourage nor frighten the distrustful and the timid. He must unmask the hypocrite, and yet not wound the sincere. He must rebuke the proud, so as not to crush the humble.

And then he must visit without respect of persons. Invited or uninvited, welcome or unwelcome, he must go. He must learn too, as best he can, when and where to go. Some are too humble, and others too proud to send for him. And among those appointed as his "helps" in this great work, some are too lazy and others too busy to tell him where his services are needed. When he makes his visits, whether to the sick or well, the regenerate, or the unregenerate, his intercourse must ever be that of the Christian gentleman and the Christian minister. He must know just how much or how little to say of secular or sacred concerns, when and how to speak of public or private affairs, how to interest the irreligious without disgusting the pious, how to interest and impress without repelling the sinner. He must be cheerful without levity, serious and yet not morose.

His position is that of a "watchman on the walls of

Zion," and as such he must lead the way in the administration of discipline. He is set for the defence of the gospel. He has vowed before heaven and earth to study the peace and purity of the church. He must therefore be the first to discover and to suggest measures of defence against treachery within, or invasion without, the fold. His eye must be the first to see the insidious approach of the wolf in sheep's clothing. And wo to him, if through sloth or cowardice he fail to give the alarm! He is bound by covenant and by oath, to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and patience." All this exposes the minister to misconception and abuse. If he permit unworthy members to go unwhipped of justice, the world censures the church and abuses him for their tolerance of error, and sneeringly asks, "What do ye more than others?" If the effort is made to purge the church of such members, this same world censures the same church and pastor for their tyranny and oppression. On such occasions, all, of every rank and every age—taught or untaught, claim to know just what is right and what is wrong; and hence even the youngest, most inexperienced, and ignorant claim to know when the minister preaches as he ought to preach, and the session rule as they ought to rule. True, they are sadly ignorant of the Bible, and the Book of Discipline. But ignorance is no hindrance, but a help to impudence, self-conceit, and rashness. Judgment is pronounced and sentence passed, even by the beardless boy and the half grown girl, while their good, easy father and mother praise them for their smartness, instead of administering a sharp rebuke for their pertness.

In this, as in ordinary warfare, the false professor

and the openly profane, are familiar with the maxim, "Kill the officers, and the victory is ours." The higher in office one stands, whether in church or state, the readier mark he is for the fiery darts of the enemy; of this we have a striking illustration in the case of the Apostle Paul, of whom one said, "Much learning hath made thee mad." Others asked, "What will this babbler say?" And others said, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods."

Even the meek and lowly Jesus was branded in proud scorn as a Nazarene; and of him they said, "He hath a devil and is mad: why hear ye him?" The spirit which prompted such abusive language, soon led Judas to betray him, and the Jews, assisted by the Roman soldiers, to bind him with cords, crown him with thorns, then crucify and slay him. And still "the servant is as his Lord." The right minded minister will not be pleased but pained to find himself less the object of this world's abuse and cruelty than was his Master. The offence of the cross has not ceased, although the wise and good government under which it is our privilege to live, shields us from civil pains and penalties. Ministers, as Christian men, suffer many privations unknown to the private members of the church. Many of them hear very little preaching, have but little time for devotional reading, see very little of each other, and have no one this side of heaven to overlook, counsel, and console them. The humble and prayerful Christian who loves his pastor, and prizes his ministrations and his visits, should be reminded, that that pastor has no pastor on all this earth. If light and comfort come not to him from above, he walks in darkness, and is, of all men, most miserable.

Now when the humble minister of a despised gospel thinks of these things—when he remembers that he is set for the rise and fall of many in Israel—when he hears his awful commission from the mouth of God—when he remembers that all he says and does must prove a "savour of life unto life, or of death unto death"—when he thinks of a coming judgment and of ministerial responsibility at that judgment; and when he looks even for a moment at his own ignorance, weakness, and sinfulness, with tearful eyes and aching heart he does and must cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" And when with all these thoughts crowding into his mind, and pressing upon his heart, he turns to you, he does and must say, "Brethren, pray for us."

Faithful ministers of the gospel do not ask to be indulged. They ask no exemption from any amount of labour commensurate with their strength, and demanded by the cause of their Master. Such ministers do not ask to be petted or flattered. They know that he is not a friend but an enemy who foolishly flatters a minister in his presence—that such treatment fans the flame of vanity—makes him arrogant and supercilious in his daily work, and plants many a thorn in his pillow by night. Oh, no, in the name especially of the young preacher, I beseech you not to treat him thus. You only lift him high that his fall may be the greater when it comes, as it will come, unless he escape by deep repentance and many tears.

But, bear with his imperfections, help his infirmities. Do as you vowed unto God you would do, when you made him your pastor, "encourage and assist him in his arduous labours"—and above all PRAY FOR HIM.

Presbyterian Board of Publication, No. 821 Chestnut St.

No. 251.

THE UNIVERSALIST;

OR,

A WORD IN SEASON.

By N. L. Y.

During my first visit to the town of O——, having been invited by a little church newly organized, with a view to entering upon labours as a Domestic Missionary, I accidentally met with a man below middle age, who had an intelligent and interesting countenance, but who, in his language, was shockingly profane. He was foreman in a manufacturing establishment which, for retail and country business, was an extensive one, and it was when I called as a stranger on business at his shop, and unrecognised by him as a clergyman, that I was the unwilling hearer of his profanity. Having concluded subsequently, in compliance with what I regarded as the leadings of Providence, to enter upon permanent ministerial labours here, I had renewed opportunities of becoming acquainted with this interesting and intelligent yet fearfully profane individual. He was an excellent workman, and what is commonly called "a good fellow." He was a man of more than ordinary intelligence, having spent some time acquiring the printer's art, having taken a partial course in college, and likewise given some attention to the study of medicine. A year spent as a soldier in the Mexican war had extended his opportunities of *observation* if it had not improved his morals. He had now been for several

years a diligent and successful workman in the calling above alluded to, with a wife and children depending on him for support.

Three years from the time I first met him found me feeling a deep interest in the man, with little hope, however, of seeing any change in his immoral and irreligious career. He had never in a single instance attended my preaching. His Sabbaths were usually spent in hunting and fishing. When approached on the subject of religion he was in the habit of repelling it with ridicule, a weapon which he knew well how to wield. And yet the uniform courtesy and kindness with which he treated me made me feel that I was not without some hold upon his confidence. I had never yet spoken to him on the subject of personal religion, but I now resolved on seeking a fit opportunity of doing so. Some weeks elapsed before such opportunity presented itself.

It was during the progress of a series of meetings connected with a communion occasion in our little church, that I called on Mr. F. at his place of business. He was not in, but came shortly. Learning at the door that I had inquired for him, he approached me with his usual urbanity, asking if I wished to see him. I replied in the affirmative. Turning and walking with him toward the rear of the shop, I said, "Mr. F., I *have* been wanting to see you. I have been thinking for some time that you do not treat me right." He was at once agitated, and began to protest his regard for me, and that if he had given offence it was unintentional. I said to him, "You do not exactly understand me. But I *have* been thinking

that you do not treat me just right. *I often come here to* YOUR *shop but somehow or other* YOU *never come to* MINE." He laughed heartily at what he seemed to enjoy as a joke; then grew sober, and, with elongated features, and eye fixed upon vacuity, seemed to be in deep thought; a second time he broke out laughing, but immediately resumed the reflective mood. "I see, I see," said he, nodding his head. "Now I reckon it *does* look a little strange after all," he added, seeming to be getting hold of a new thought. "Where do you *have* church?" he continued, adding, upon my answering his question, "Well, I must come up; yes, that I must." He told me, however, before separating, that he *did* attend church sometimes, when he had *his own kind*, and gave me to understand that he had been for some years a member of the Universalist Society in our town—a fact of which I was not before aware.

Two days later he was present for the first time in the church, at a week-day evening service, and at the close tarried to ask me what was required in order to membership in the Presbyterian Church. The following Sabbath he was present at Divine service, accompanied by his wife, a privilege which, from that time on he lost no opportunity of enjoying. A few evenings later he sought an interview with me at my house. About the first question after we were seated in my study related to what we required of applicants for membership in our church. He desired to know whether he could be admitted to membership still holding Restorationist views of future punishment. I replied, in substance: "Mr. F., we are not accustomed

to place before an individual the articles of our creed, demanding his assent. We *do* ask, however, that he profess to be, and give credible evidence that he is *a Christian.*" He said, in answer, deliberately, and with evident feeling, "I know I am *not* a Christian, but I desire to be one, I *mean* to be one." I now felt assured that he was in earnest, and I embraced the opportunity of offering such advice as might aid him in seeking to become a Christian. Near two hours were occupied in the interview. Near its close he again presented the question with which he had commenced, though in a modified form. "Suppose I should become a Christian and still hold Restoration views, would they exclude me from your church?" "Mr. F.," I said, in reply, "Seek first and above all things to become a Christian, and when you shall have gained that end I have no idea that your Restoration views will be any barrier to your admission to the church." He seemed satisfied and evidently gratified by my answer, though it was manifest that he did not then comprehend its full import.

My next interview with him was on the evening of our weekly prayer-meeting—a dark, inclement night, such that but three persons besides had interest and courage enough to lead them to the place of prayer. "I feel that the fountains of the great deep are being broken up," was one of his remarks. He alluded, of his own motion, to the duties of family religion, expressing his sense of their obligation, yet seeming to feel that it was a tremendous task *for him* to undertake them. "I have been thinking," said he, "in regard to Universalism, why it is that it does not make

men *better*. The simple truth is, that while there are *some* moral men who are Universalists, the mass of them are immoral persons who manifestly have no religion." The thought was not a new one to me, though it seemed to be a very recent one to him. "But," I asked him, "are there not unworthy persons in all denominations?" "I suppose," was his answer, "they are *exceptions*. If you see a tree on which there is much good fruit yet an occasional specimen of that which is diminutive, blighted, and worthless, you do not therefore conclude that the tree is bad. But if you find a tree upon which *all* the fruit is of this worthless kind, you conclude differently." Such were the workings of his own mind in regard to that system of which he had been a professor for a number of years, but which he now discovered had exerted no renovating, restraining influence upon his life.

A few days later he said to me, "I have been led to think that I have met with a change. My feelings have been very different from anything I ever before experienced. And now, if you deem me worthy of it, I feel that it would be a privilege to be a member of the church. I feel that the sooner and the more thoroughly I commit myself the better." Accordingly the church session was convened to consider his application. In the meantime, there were those who knew a little, and but very little of Mr. F.'s religious interest who could not believe that this merry, free-thinking, free-speaking individual, hitherto skeptical, and who had been accustomed to treat experimental religion with jokes and sarcasm, was really a sincere inquirer. This distrust was increased by the fact that

Mr. F. had stated, a few days after his inquiries began, that he had not renounced, nor been asked to renounce his former views. His remark was true. I had not attacked his Universalism. I had not called upon him to renounce any of his views. I had urged him to read the Bible, and pray for light and salvation, confident that the Spirit of God, who, as I believed, had stirred up these inquiries and opened his heart to the truth, would shine more and more in his heart, leading him to Jesus, and to the truth which should make him free. And never were expectations more happily realized. Gradually did his Universalism crumble, fragment after fragment falling to the ground, until not a stone of the edifice was left upon another. Under what I believe to have been the teachings of the Spirit of God, it melted away like snow in a summer's sun, until he could say, as he did to me with emphasis, "I renounce the whole thing."

I informed him, before the meeting of session, of the distrust with which some persons viewed his application, and of a warning I had received in regard to his being still a Universalist. He remarked, "I greatly desire to be a member of the church, but probably my application had better be withdrawn for the present. I am willing to wait any length of time necessary to show my sincerity. If you say for me to wait *a year* I will try and not allow myself to be discouraged by it." We did not think it proper to recommend any delay. After a most satisfactory examination, by unanimous vote he was admitted to the fellowship of the church—a step which no member of session afterwards regretted.

He immediately addressed himself to the discharge of Christian duty. The family altar it was no easy task to set up in a household where he himself, by argument and ridicule, had laboured but too successfully to produce alienation from experimental piety; yet he did it. His fowling-piece, the companion of his Sabbath sports, he had now no occasion for, and carrying it to the house of a friend who was in impaired health, recommended him to keep and use it in exercise and recreation. His two little boys he presented for baptism, vowing to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He took his place at once in the prayer-meeting. In the Sabbath-school he became a teacher, and, after a time, the superintendent. To his family, to his neighbours, and to the community, he was manifestly a changed man. He had more to contend with in endeavouring to lead a Christian life than some others whose early training and habits had been different, and who possessed a nature less impulsive, but if he fell short of that perfectly exemplary deportment at which the Christian aims, none were more sensible of the fact, or more sad over it than he. Frequent and delightful were the interviews which it was my privilege to hold with him, and he spake to me freely of his joys and sorrows, his triumphs and trials, his fears, his temptations, his conscious weakness, and the strength he found in Christ.

He often expressed his wonder and gratitude in regard to the dealings of Divine Providence with himself. It was at first a great mystery to him how it came that I had gone to his shop and spoken to him as I did,

and at the time I did. But he learned to refer it to the gracious providence of God, who had both sent the message and inclined him to receive it. As to Universalism, he considered it a species of Infidelity. He had professed it for years. His library was well supplied with its literature, and he was fond of arguing in its favour. He had considered himself a sincere believer in its doctrines, yet he now discovered that he had only been trying hard *to convince himself* of that which he was deeply *interested* in finding to be true. Universalism promised comfort to a profane and immoral man, and he had therefore embraced it, and tried hard to secure to himself its support. Careful, candid, prayerful, reading of the Scriptures was with him the antidote to Universalism.

His earthly career was short. His name is among those who have fallen in the terrible civil war with which, in the providence of God, our land has been visited. A sense of duty led him to enroll himself as a volunteer in the United States service. By the suffrages of his fellow-soldiers he was made Orderly of his company, and bade fair for higher position. But promotion of another kind awaited him. His regiment was in the front rank of the brave men who fought the battle of Belmont, on the eighth day of November, A.D. 1861. While nobly doing his duty as a soldier in that hotly contested action, the fatal ball pierced his vitals and snapped asunder the thread of life. His mortal remains, interred on that battle-field, await the trump which shall call us all to judgment.

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No. 252.

THE SOLDIER'S COMFORT.

MY SUFFERING SOLDIER FRIEND:—If I should now come and stand beside you, minister to your wants, and speak words of tender pity and compassion, to remind you that though far from mother, sister, or wife, yet there are many hearts bleeding at the thought of your sufferings, would you not believe that I really cared for you? You would not, I am sure, think that a spirit of mere curiosity would lead one to leave home and friends and all that nature prizes most, to minister to you in your suffering and loneliness.

But suppose I should say with such earnestness that you would have to believe me: "My poor friend, I wish I *could* suffer in your stead. I wish I could lay down my youth, and health, and vigour for your restoration, who have fought and bled for the country we both love so well." You would then perhaps feel a little more impressed

with the intensity of my wish to relieve you. But this suffering in your stead, this transfer of pain and loss from one sinful creature to another, is, we know, impossible. I can suffer, God knows how many hearts do suffer *with* you; but we are helpless further than to strive to soothe and cheer, and implore the Great Physician to heal all your diseases.

But perhaps you may think, "No one can know how much I suffer. The doctors pity me, and so do you; but really it does very little good."

Did you never hear of any one's curing his own heart-ache by sympathy with the greater sufferings of others? I know this may seem a strange prescription, but it has been found a very good one, by many who were almost crushed by the great grief God had sent upon them. When we see another suffering, without a murmur, tenfold more than we do, we feel ashamed to think so much of our own misery.

And there is *One*, my poor suffering friend, who does know the full measure of your sufferings, and who was "wounded for our

transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities;" who also "took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." He was "even obedient unto death" for us, that we might have life in him, and from him I come now to tell you how his infinite, tender heart yearns pityingly over you, longing to have you look at his wounds, that you may be healed of your *worst* wounds—those made by sin.

It is not as a stranger that he looks at you. "He knoweth our frame," for he is our Maker, and "He remembereth that we are dust." He is at once your wisest, truest, most compassionate Friend—the "Brother born for adversity," and the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." See the wonderful proof he has given of his love.

When the whole world was lying under sentence of death for sin, Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God the Father, out of pure pity and love came down to suffer and die as our *substitute*. And this he did when we were enemies to him and his holy law. No higher proof of love can be given than this. A few times in the history of the race men have

been found willing to die for friends, but no mere man has ever yet been found willing to die for enemies. God commendeth his love to us in that while we were yet sinners, enemies, Christ died for us. You surely cannot doubt his love for you, when you consider further, what a *dreadful death* he endured for you. It was not an ordinary death of a man gently breathing out his life among friends and in peace. It was a violent, cruel, lingering death, amid the jeers and scoffs of enemies. His friends all forsook him, one betrayed him, another denied him, and even God, his Father, withdrew the light of his countenance from him, extorting that bitterest cry that earth or heaven ever heard: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Do you remember how the *whole body* of Jesus was bruised, and torn, and pierced for us? You remember, after Pilate the Roman governor had scourged him, how soldiers wove a crown of thorns and bound it around the Saviour's head. You remember how his tender, compassionate hands, which had ever been ready to help and heal, and his weary,

toil-worn feet, were torn by the nails which fastened him to Calvary's cross. His side was pierced by a soldier's spear, until from the wound there came out blood and water. Thus head, and hands, and side were bruised and bleeding for you.

But he did still more than this for you. The bodily agony of crucifixion was the smallest part of his suffering. He bore the weight of your sins—the sins of all who will believe on him. The punishment of sin lay heavy upon him. In the garden of Gethsemane it pressed him down to the earth, and "being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground." The penalty of sin was the bitterest portion of the cup which his Father gave him to drink. He drank even this for you.

My poor friend, should not the remembrance of the infinite agony of Jesus for your sake, and his death from love to your soul, make you almost forget your own physical pains, while from your grateful heart should burst songs of praise "unto him

who hath so loved us as to give himself for us."

In the great book of accounts the recording angel writes down our sins. What a list for but a single day! And think, what must be the record for thousands of days. And each of these sins deserves God's eternal wrath and curse. But look! One stands beside the book—the "Lamb as it had been slain." It is Jesus, the sinner's Friend. He shows you his hands and his side, pierced for you, and with tender, pitying look, he asks you to believe on him and love him; and the moment you do, he lays his bleeding hand upon the page and blots out all your sins with his own blood.

Soldier, soldier, oh trust in Jesus. Repent, confess, and forsake your sins, and love him who hath so loved you as to give his own life for you. Then whatever you may be called to suffer, you will be happy, for Jesus pities, soothes, comforts all who love him far more than does a mother her suffering child. "He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds."

May this same Jesus, "who ever liveth to make intercession," send his Holy Spirit with these words, and show you infinitely more of his love, and your need of him, than any fellow sinner can! And unto the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all the glory for evermore. Amen.

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on

him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors: and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.—Isaiah liii.

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No. 253.

HAVE YOU LOST A FRIEND?

THE death of a friend is always an event in one's history. It is an occurrence in human life which never by its frequency ought to lose its solemnity. By the most serious reality of earth it invites you to contemplation and spiritual improvement. One whom you have heretofore met on the earth you are never to meet upon it again. The last interview has been had, the last recognition exchanged, and a separation for all time has taken place. In many things you have been disappointed, but here is a fact to which you have never known an exception. No one who has ever thus left you has ever been seen to return, and besides all this, experience teaches you that this is but a prelude to your own departure—a result certain to you beyond all other supposed certainties, unalterable. The death, then, of one you know, although an ordinary thing, should make an extraordinary impression. The final lesson of life is brought about as near to you as it can be this side of your own departure. Thus, both as a separation and a transcript of your own destiny, we may well speak and think of it as an event in our personal history. "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart." Will you? The voice from such an

occasion is not to the dead. Over the intelligence of this departure, over the coffined corpse, over the ready grave, the language of Providence is to you. The funeral over, the last farewell, the felt absence, the vacant place, all have a language which addresses itself to your soul. A plain man who started to attend a funeral at a distance, but was too late, was asked whether he heard the sermon. "Ah! no," said he, "but I met one." The procession, the pall, the fact was and is an address on human destiny, with salvation as the theme, and eternity the application.

Still nearer; it may be death has entered your own family circle. A parent, a partner, a brother, a sister, a child, shall no longer mingle in your family greetings. It is not enough that you have been saddened by the bereavement, that tears of natural sympathy and sorrow have been shed, that you have given way to the momentary gush of grief. Too often, alas! the world with its business and care rolls itself over the breach, and men go on, little knowing how many friends they could recount in the grave, and still unmindful of their own preparation for such a certain destiny. Will you not now endeavour to receive an impression for good from this event, and to improve it by meditation upon your own spiritual state and prospects? What are the weighty interests thereby presented for your consideration, not by a mere description, but by an actual and affecting occurrence?

1st. You are personally taught the uncertainty of life. It is a home thrust at your mortality. It brings us to a point at which body and intellect must need pause to think about soul. Physical and intellectual strength have fallen to the earth, and a corpse is the residue of their weakness. It is a position from which to look backward and forward and at which the worldling, if he will but talk honestly with himself, will say, Well, after all, of what little value are the riches, and houses, and pleasures of the world? Here is death, which to-day, to-morrow, next week, or this year may meet me as it has this one, and then—what next? "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Have I taken into account in my plans in this world the narrow space that separates me from eternity? And do I act in reference thereto? Those stronger as well as weaker, those younger as well as older, those more useful as well as less, have departed, and you have no guaranty for a day. The only consolation you can have in the prospect, or that your friends can have in your departure, is that as a wise man you have taken these facts as the important basis of your life, and have chosen salvation by Christ as your unfailing portion and your undoubted reward. Without this, what a miserable failure has been your existence thus far. You have but sown tares, and there is no good harvest to be reaped for immortality. You have sown the

wind, and thus continuing shall reap the whirlwind. Over this loss learn never to forget your own mortality, and let the lesson be sanctified by prayer.

2d. This loss teaches the need of a Friend over whom death has no power. How sad in a mere earthly point of view does the death of a friend sometimes seem! The love-cemented ties of years are broken; the widowed mother, the pitiful orphan bereft, the only son taken; or, if not so severe, one after another of those around whom our heart's sympathies have intertwined, are gone. But there is a Friend from whom death cannot part us. The chief Friend left us is the Christian's sweet consoling comfort, as he is parted one by one from his cherished earthly relationship. To the living or the dying saint this is the bow of promise, of hope, of joy, and of peace that circles about the tomb.

"And will he prove a Friend indeed?
Oh, yes, the very Friend you need."

Is it not worth while to make sure of such a Friend—a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, whose love for us has but just commenced its eternity when others are taken from us? Oh, sinner, upon what other help can you rely when all earthly friends are unavailing? Pale mortality cannot assist itself or you, but a Saviour, full of an immortality of love, offers to be your Friend. In view of death, of the loss of all earthly companions, do you not need, will you not value, and

seek, and have this Friend? He is voluntarily yours, if in the way of his appointment you will be his. This is not leaning upon an arm of flesh, whose doom is "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return," but sublime reliance upon Him who enabled his loved ones in joyful accents and friendly confidence to exult, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! Thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." What comfort is such a fellowship! Does not the loss of a friend commend to us so significantly, as death only can, our need of such friendship?

3d. If you are not a Christian, this loss brings right directly before you the whole subject of your immortal prospects and destiny in most significant reality. We stand facing the most solemn fact in the universe, for this is death and "after that the judgment." It may summon you suddenly, unexpectedly, quickly, and if unprepared you go not "to be for ever with the Lord," but for ever "with the devil and his angels," where weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth are the eternal portion of all not redeemed by accepting in this life salvation through Christ. You go from the free offer of rejected mercy down to the everlasting sorrow of the sinner's doom. By carelessness, by worldliness, by unbelief, you are missing the grand aim of life, and making sure of eternal wo. Make all the vain excuses you may at

other times, here at the corpse of a friend, there is no disguising the matter. If you do not, looking to Jesus, make up your mind to be saved, you will be lost. Now is the good time to set your face heavenward. Will you not hear God speaking to you in this providence? Will you not look to him, not only for comfort now, but for peace beyond? Is he not waiting to be gracious? "I have no pleasure, saith the Lord God, in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his wicked way and live." "If he turn not, he hath prepared for him the instruments of death." "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." While considering this loss of a friend, consider, I beseech you, the eternal interests to which it points you. Let not the teaching be lost. Lay hold upon eternal life. Go to God in prayer, seek the blessed Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." In the presence or in thoughts upon this warning, act so that death shall not find you unprepared. Resolve from this very hour to set out to serve the Lord, to use all the appointed means of grace, and to seek and secure the salvation of your soul. It will be a sad thing if you let this visitation pass without awakening you to a sense of personal danger. It is God in mercy speaking to you this side of the judgment, this side of your own last sickness or sudden death, and let not the voice of his

providence fail to awaken you so as to hear beside it the voice of his grace. The subject it proposes to you is personal preparation for eternity, and dismiss not this one great theme until you have hope in Christ. "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

4th. If you are a Christian, this loss of a friend presents to you anew the importance of diligence in duty. You owe it to yourself that you may grow in grace, and so an entrance be administered unto you more abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. You owe it to your fellow Christians, that as your dearest friends on earth you may do them the greatest kindness, and help them onward to the heavenly Jerusalem; and you owe it to the unconverted around you, who, by the double certainty of their lives and yours, may soon be for ever beyond the reach of your influence and lie down in everlasting burnings. Over the fallen temple of that body, the language of the prophet is again applicable: "Who is left among you that saw this house in its glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong, saith the Lord, and *work;* for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts." We must not be day-dreaming, good-resolving, but life-acting. Have you influence to exert, talents to employ, a word of persuasion to offer? Is your friend, your neighbour, yet out of

Christ? Have you never yet made an effort for his soul? In this loss is the assurance that death will not wait for your delay. The word must be spoken, the book or tract offered, the prayer made, the influence exercised, or death will end the possibility. We are to watch and to seek opportunity, and this loss is a new incentive to action. Its language is, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."

Whoever or whatever then, my reader, you may be, the death of a friend is a message from God to you. It increases your responsibility; it leaves you better or more illy prepared for the other world; it ripens you for glory or despair; it deserves more than a respectful notice or a passing thought. By it be drawn to consider more closely your own immortal interest. Let it moderate your devotion to the world; let it fasten your attention to the cross; let it exalt the spiritual above the carnal; let it direct you more closely to Him who alone can deliver you from the greater horror of the second death. Remember your loss, not in the mere pang of human grief, but that "as sin hath reigned unto death even so" in your heart may "grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

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No. 254.

"DO YOU THINK YOU SHALL DIE?"

BY M. A. S.

When Mrs. Earl was quite sick, her little son could not be persuaded to leave her room, until he had been left alone with his mother for a moment. Scarcely had the wish been granted him, when standing by her side, his little bosom heaving, the tears filling his eyes, and his voice almost refusing to give utterance to his words, he whispered in broken accents:

"Mamma, do you think you shall die?"

The thought that she might die, and he might never see her again, had so overpowered his young mind, that he could not leave that mother, who was all the world to him, until he had asked her that one question, so full of sadness.

Dear reader, we are standing side by side, we may never meet again, until we meet before the judgment-bar. I cannot let you go until I have asked you the same question:

"Do you think that you shall die?"

I hear you say: "Why ask me such a question? I am in perfect health."

I know you are; for that reason I address you, lest your health so perfect, your life so active, your constitution so strong, make you forget the certainty of death. The roses in your cheeks make you forget the pallor of the tomb.

Let us, then, dear friends, glance for a moment at

the past, and think for a moment of the future. We may, perchance, learn a lesson therefrom which may be well for us.

Have you not seen the autumnal leaf in the morning, so fresh and green, in the evening laid gray and lifeless at the foot of the parent stem? Have you not seen the rose-bud, just bursting from its casket, so exquisite in its loveliness that you would not pluck it lest you should mar its beauty. You go at eve to gaze upon it. Its beauty is faded, its leaves are wilted, its loveliness is gone. You look for the cause, and in the very heart of that exquisite rose you find *one little insect* concealed. That little insect was there when you gazed at the bud in all its purity and beauty. It was *all unseen to you*, but nevertheless taking the very life from its heart.

Thus it is with us: one day in perfect health, the life and light of a loving circle of admiring friends; the next day cold, lifeless, and still.

Let us look for a moment at some whose prospects of life were as good, perchance even better than our own; whose anticipations were as bright, whose hopes as precious. But, alas! those hopes have been blighted, those anticipations were never realized, and their life, which was as a vapour, has vanished away.

But a short time since, in the pretty country town of C——, might have been seen a young girl preparing for her bridal. In three short days she was to leave the home of her childhood. How tinted with gold was every cloud! How filled with bliss was every dream! Yet even then a dark cloud was gathering which was to cast a gloom over her whole life. In the neighbouring town might, at the same time, have

been seen her affianced husband, a young physician, bending over the death-bed of one whom he had in vain tried to save. The friends desire an examination, the physician makes it, the dissecting-knife slips and makes a slight wound on his finger, so slight that he scarcely notices it, until a few hours after, the intense pain proceeding from the wound shows too plainly that that fatal disease has been inoculated into his own system, and is now progressing with fearful rapidity. Fearing the worst, they send for his affianced, she reaches him just in time to see him breathe his last.

Morning came—the morning which but three days before she had looked forward to with so many bright hopes and happy visions. Now, alas! how changed! The robes of the bridegroom were changed for those of the tomb; the robes of the bride for the widow's weeds, all seems dark within that chamber of death. But one ray of hope, one comfort is left for that sad mourner. It is the hope that he is now in heaven, but for that her heart would break. In their early days they had both pledged their first, best love to their Saviour; and now, although the outer world is changed from all that was beautiful and fair to all that was sad and lonely, yet with the eye of faith she can look through the dark billows which have almost overwhelmed her, and say: "Although He takes away my all, still will I trust in Him, for 'He doeth all things well.'"

If you should thus be thrown in a moment upon a bed of sickness and death, dear reader, would it be well with you? Are you prepared to meet the summons at *any* moment when the Master may call you?

If not, tell me, with the realities of eternity before you, will the few short hours allotted you on the bed of death, when racked with pain and anguish, perhaps deprived of reason, be fitting hours in which to prepare to meet your God? Reason and judgment answer, "No." Then why will you not, while your reason is clear, your intellect undimmed by sickness or disease, give your heart to your Saviour, so that when you are summoned to meet your Judge you may be enabled to meet him with joy and not with grief? What surety have you of life more than that young man? Flee then to Jesus before it is too late.

Let us now for a moment enter a darkened chamber, in the quiet city of R——. There lies a young man, cold and still. Bending over his lifeless form is one who, in the bitterness of her grief, is bowed almost to the earth. They had plighted their early vows, and this very day, when the cold clods of the valley are to fall so heavily upon the bosom of him whom she had loved more than her own life, she had expected him to claim her as his own. This was to have been their bridal morning. A few days before the whole fashionable society of R—— had been thrown into excitement at the invitations for this very wedding. It was to have been one of the most brilliant parties of the kind that had ever taken place in the city; every thing that art, fashion, and taste could do to make the bride and her home attractive and beautiful at that time had been done. But now the emblems of mourning hang from the door. The funeral cards take the place of the wedding invitations. There is grief instead of joy, mourning instead of feasting. But a few hours before the affianced bridegroom was

in perfect health; now he has gone to his eternal home.

Wherefore did the destroying angel come at such a time, when life was so full of bright anticipations? We can only reply in the words of the Bible: "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart."

Oh! if each one who received the invitations to that funeral did indeed lay it to heart, it would be well; for to some it may have been the last warning of a loving Saviour. He would have whispered to each one that this was not their home, that he had prepared a place for them among his Father's mansions, that they might dwell with him for ever. If they would but believe and live, he would have bidden them number their days, that they might apply their hearts to wisdom. He would have asked them if they were laying up their treasure in heaven or on earth, and would have added, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Alas! how many fritter away this life, like the gay butterfly on his wing, receiving all their good things here, forgetting that as they sow so shall they reap. Shall it be thus with you, dear friend, or will you sow the seeds of righteousness that you may reap eternal life?

Had I been asked, while attending the elegant reception of Mrs. Dr. W——, who of that company would be the first called hence? I should scarcely have pointed to a young man, the son of a widow, who was at that time in perfect health and with his exquisite musical talent entertaining us all.

A few short weeks passed; I met that mother on board a steamer when, with her usual smile, she said: "We are all here but Willie, he is travelling through the West and will soon return."

When next I saw her, she was bowed with grief, while the deep crape encircling her person told too plainly that she had drunk from the sad waters of affliction.

Willie, her son, had returned. How changed, alas! For his robes were those of death. No more would he be the light of her home, no more the hope and pride of her heart; for he, with many others, had perished on board the ill-fated Lady Elgin.

Thus are our young men taken in the bloom of life, when they least expect the destroyer; while we who are more advanced are spared, we know not why.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed every one who looked upon the cold, lifeless remains of Emma Dale. Yes, there she lay, beautiful even in death. Less than a year since, the dress which is now upon her, the long flowing vail which encircles her, the pure, spotless orange blossoms which press her brow, were worn at her bridal. Oh! little did she think they would be her shroud.

Not one of all that large circle of acquaintance dare ask that afflicted mother how Emma felt, when told that she must die. No, an inward shudder thrills us, as we remember that she lived utterly and entirely for this world. We would rather leave her with her God than to lift the vail. She was the gayest of the gay—so attractive, so beautiful that she was admired by all!

But a few months before, when the mother was

asked if she did not think Emma was too worldly, if it would not be well for her to think sometimes of eternity. She replied:

"Oh! no, Emma is too young to die; there will be time enough to think of serious things by-and-by. I believe in letting young people enjoy themselves."

Alas! too late, she learned that Emma was mortal. We are all mortal; none of us too young to die; therefore, *none too young to prepare for death.* Who can say when his *last hour* shall come?

Louise P—— was very lovely; she seemed more like a being from heaven than earth. She was so exquisitely graceful, so sweet and gentle, so refined and elegant, that one felt as if in the presence of a superior being, yet with all this loveliness she lacked the one thing needful. No expense had been spared upon her education—music, painting, dancing, all contributed to make her attractive. The most fastidious could find something in her to admire, yet her poor soul had never learned to love its God. Her mother, although a professing Christian, had educated her daughter entirely for this world. She was fitted to adorn any circle on earth, yet not fitted for heaven.

At length Louise was married; the match was all her friends could ask. She became a mother. How bright were her hopes, as she pressed to her bosom that infant daughter! But she took cold, almost immediately brain-fever set in; she became insensible, and remained so to the last. She entered eternity without having had an instant in which to think of the fearful change. Her mother sat by her side in an agony of grief; she would have given worlds could

she but bring back that precious, that only daughter to her reason, that one short hour might be given in which to make her peace with God. But no, the destroying angel stayed not until his victim was laid low. And there sat that afflicted mother, mourning as David did for Absalom: "Would I had died for thee!" It was in vain to offer consolation; she mourned *without hope.* Days, weeks, months passed, but that mother was never seen to smile. In one short year she is laid in the grave by her child. *She died of a broken heart,* for upon examination it was found there was no disease upon her.

If such can be the grief of a mother at feeling a child is unprepared to meet her God, what must be the agony at the last great day to know our children are eternally lost through our own worldliness and neglect! Shall we who have, by the blessing of God, precious children committed to our charge forget our high responsibilities? Shall we train these immortal souls for *time* and not for *eternity?* Shall the jewels God has given us be gems in our crown of rejoicing, or shall we wear a starless crown? Shall we in heaven be surrounded by our loved ones, or shall we be there alone?

Dear reader, will you heed these warnings? Shall it be in vain that Christ died for you? Will you not partake of the cup of salvation and live?

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

THE INEVITABLE CONTEST.

"THERE IS NO DISCHARGE IN THAT WAR."—Eccl. viii. 8.

A SOLDIER in the service of his country may become disabled through ill health, or the loss of limbs, by reason of which he may obtain a "certificate of disability" and be released, but that war which knows "no discharge" regards not physical deficiencies. They are rather the unmistakable evidences of the sure approach of death, of its irresistible claims, of its final triumph.

Some procure exemption from military duty through substitutes, inducing and paying others to go in their places, but no one has ever been "ransomed from the power of the grave" nor "redeemed from death" by providing another, and never will. Although individuals have been found who were willing to die for others, and have said, "Would God I had died for thee," yet not in a single instance has an offer of this kind been accepted. Each must go down to the dark river for himself alone and not for another: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

The private by heroic deeds may be promoted to official rank, which gives him the privilege of resigning, and his resignation may be accepted. But when and where did the "king of terrors" show favour for honoured acts, for valour, or to the great ones of earth, as kings and queens, as presidents, and generals. He knows no difference between the high and the low,

the master and the servant, the richest millionaire and the poorest Lazarus. No respect is paid to persons—

> "The tall, the wise, the reverend head,
> Must lie as low as ours."

Others are freed from service, whether the war is ended or not, by virtue of the limitation of enlistment. But death admits of no discharge by limitation. Who has any hope of escape by reaching a particular period in life? None, no, none. "Thou hast all seasons for thy own, O Death." "His days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." The sturdy oak that has firmly resisted the storms of centuries at last falls, and meets the same fate as the tender annual. So the man of vigour may endure the winters of four-score years, yet eventually with tottering steps he goes down to the valley of death. Yes, "it is appointed unto men once to die."

The termination of the war releases the volunteer, for his country has no further need of his services. But the war that knows "no discharge" will not close while a mortal lives, "for death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." For many a long century has death thrown its fatal arrows at man, and for many to come it will do the same. More than thirty millions die annually, and fifty every minute. This war will go on among the inhabitants of earth until the last trumpet shall sound.

A discharge is sometimes obtained through false statements of anxious friends, and in a few cases by bribing the officials of government. But the "king of terrors" cannot be evaded nor diverted by such

means. With him no deception can be practised with success, nor bribe accepted. Often have "millions" been offered for "an inch of time," but all was unavailing to ward off his irresistible advances.

Occasionally a soldier seeks exemption by deserting the ranks and fleeing the country, and now and then one succeeds. But "the last enemy" to be conquered is equally found in every land. He finds the deserter as surely in one place as another. In the frozen regions of the North, in the sunny plains of the South; yea, in the most salubrious climes, his footsteps are traced and his war-cry is heard.

A few are discharged in disgrace for some gross misdemeanor. But no matter how degraded or demoralized in character man becomes, this fact does not repel but rather hastens the rapid march of "the fell destroyer."

While, therefore, exemption may be obtained, as we have seen, from the military duty of one's country, the sweeping conscription has gone forth from the eternal throne that enrolls and enlists every individual of our race in a war that knows "no discharge." There is no resisting this "draft." It is vain to plead the press of business, or that we have unfinished plans, and are not quite ready. When the "appointed" hour comes, ready or not, willing or not, we must march off to that "bourn whence no traveller returns."

To meet this "last of foes" in triumph, a preparation is necessary. Our depraved nature itself, as well as God's word, testifies to this. We must abjure the service of sin and Satan. We must be heartily and regularly enlisted soldiers under the great "Captain of salvation."

Our names must be enrolled in the Lamb's "book of life," and we must "fight the good fight of faith," under the banner of the ever-victorious Immanuel. Although we must meet the conflict, and cannot adjourn the day of attack, yet if we have the Christian's armour on, every warrior is sure to come off conqueror, and more than conqueror, through Him "who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light." Often do they, "who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage," "walk through the valley of the shadow of death fearing no evil;" yea, even exulting and triumphing aloud in God their Saviour.

Reader, are you a sinner unreconciled to God and without an interest in Christ? "Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." Hasten and delay not to make ready. To-morrow may be "too late."

But, reader, are you a true believer in Jesus Christ? Have you put on "the whole armour of God," the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit?" If so, then as you cross over Jordan under the guidance of your glorious Leader, to take possession of the "promised land," where sin and death are known no more, it will be your privilege to raise the victor's triumphant song: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

No. 256.

THE SOLDIERS' HOSPITAL.

My Sick or Wounded Friend:—I call you friend, although I have not seen you, for I am a friend of the noble cause in which you have suffered, and a friend to every soldier who has risked his life in defence of his country. You have my sincere sympathy, and that of thousands of others. Lately you entered the army full of life and energy, and you did not shrink back when the hour of danger arrived; now you are laid aside in the hospital, perhaps far from the friends that loved you, while strangers minister to you in your suffering hours. I know that this is very painful, and I do not wonder that you should sometimes become impatient during the long days and nights of your affliction. How much pleasure it would give me to comfort you in your distress, and relieve your pains. As I cannot be near you, I take this method of conversing with you.

My dear friend and brother, why do you think God has permitted you to be disabled? It has not happened by chance. Your Creator has had a wise and merciful purpose in laying you aside from the noise and distraction of the camp. It is that you may seriously reflect on the interests of your soul. Perhaps, in the days of your health, you were careless and irreligious, and thought of nothing but this world. You may have said, "I am young, and in good health, and there is time enough yet, to think of death and eternity." Perhaps you thought religion would make you sad and spoil your pleasures, and therefore you put aside all serious thought as troublesome. This

our property, and our health, we are, in a measure, forced to think. You, my friend, instead of being killed in battle, have been disabled, and here you are laid upon a bed of pain, that you may think of your soul. Had you been killed, would you have safely passed into the other world? Surely not, unless you had first gone to Jesus, who is the only Saviour of sinners. He died upon the cross to save you from your sins, and all you have to do is to put your trust in him. You cannot save yourself. You have no righteousness and cannot appear before a holy God. You have made yourself his enemy by your transgressions, and how, then, would you be dismayed to appear before him? Be of good comfort, Christ has died for the chief of sinners, and all who come with humble and broken hearts to him will find him to be an almighty Saviour. His blood will wash away your sins, his perfect righteousness will be accounted your righteousness, he will send his Holy Spirit into your soul that you may be converted and made a new creature, and will enable you to say, "whereas I was blind, now I see!" Is he not a great Saviour, and will you not believe and trust in him? Dismiss every other thought until you find this Saviour to be your Saviour. This is the one thing needful. It will make your life happy and your death safe and joyful.

My dear friend, the greatest and best wish of my heart, is that you may now believe in Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life. Painful as it is to lie on this bed, you will then bless God that your sickness or wounds brought you to this hospital. Peace be with you.

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

No. 257.

WATCH.

WATCHFULNESS is a most important duty. Success in any department of business depends much upon it.

The merchant must be careful to watch the markets, the state of the crops or of manufactures, the usages of foreign ports, the signs of the times in every respect, in order that he may be wise to know when to buy or sell, that he may "get gain."

The mechanic must watch and keep pace with every improvement in his line of work; he must know how he can obtain his materials, that he may make his contracts upon such a basis as to secure fidelity to his employer, and profit, and good reputation to himself.

The physician must watch his patient, in order to understand every feature of his case, that he may apply the proper remedies.

The farmer must watch for the sowing and the reaping times. He must watch the growing crop in all its stages. He must watch against every agency that may tend to blight his crop and thus render his labour fruitless.

Watch is written upon the tools of the day labourer as he goes forth at sunrise to his hardy toil "to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow."

Watch is engraven upon the lawyer's brief as he pleads before the jury, with eloquent lips, the cause of some poor prisoner at the bar.

Watch is stamped by the Divine hand upon the

commission of the Minister of the Gospel, as he stands up under the weight of his fearful responsibilities to preach "Christ and him crucified" to his dying fellow men. Yes, "for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account."—Hebrew xiii. 17.

A few extracts from God's Holy Word will establish more clearly and forcibly than anything which I have said, the vast importance of watchfulness; viz.:

"Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."—Matt. xxiv. 42.

"Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."—Matt. xxv. 13.

"Watch ye, therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning.

"Lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.

"And what I say unto you, I say unto all, WATCH."—Mark xiii. 35, 36, 37.

The army regulations lay much stress upon this great duty. See the section which defines the duties of Sentinels, articles 405, 406, 414, 415, and 417.

No. 405, in particular, says, "Sentinels must keep themselves on the alert, (that is, must be watchful,) observing everything that takes place within sight and hearing of their post."

So strictly careful should Sentinels be, that they should never march their rounds back to back, but each should face the back of his comrade, lest an enemy should suddenly spring between them and overpower them both before an alarm could be sounded.

It also enables each one to watch his comrade. Remember, O Sentinel, *Watch!* "What I say unto you, I say unto all, WATCH."

Some evenings ago, while in a barber's shop, "waiting my turn," a plain railroad man came in; he was a "switch tender," a position although humble, yet requiring great fidelity, particularly as it regards watchfulness. He seemed to be greatly wearied and broken down for want of sleep and proper rest. He said he had hardly slept any for four or five nights; so many troops and so many munitions of war were passing over the road (the Northern Central) on their way to the army of the Potomac. Two nights previous there had been a most terrific storm; the wind blew fearfully from the northeast,—the rain and snow and hail fell thick and fast, covering the ground with sleet,—the night was pitchy dark and very, very cold —and yet the poor, lonely switch tender must be at his post. He must *watch*, else some sad disaster might happen to the trains,—many lives might be lost,—much valuable property destroyed. So to guard against any such mishap, the poor, wearied, and almost worn-out switch tender walked up and down the track the whole live-long night, in the teeth of the bitter storm, for fear that he might fall asleep from fatigue and not be on the lookout at the time when the train passed. Noble, thrice noble fellow! "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Would that there were more like thee! How strikingly in contrast with the above is the following case, related to me some years ago by a friend, who travelled much on the great "Father of Waters," (the Mississippi,) the na-

vigation of which was very much endangered by "Snags and Sawyers." Of course great watchfulness was necessary upon the part of those who had charge of steamboats and other vessels sailing on that river.

One dark night, as my friend was steaming it down the river, on board one of its floating palaces, he thought he would go on deck towards midnight and see what sort of watch they kept; he did so and found every man asleep at his post. Was it a matter of wonder that they were *snagged* and sunk before morning?

If watchfulness is of such vast consequence as connected with the interests already mentioned, what colossal proportions it assumes when applied to the eternal interests of the immortal soul!

Is it, O! is it not of infinite moment to you, my fellow man, my brother traveller to the judgment seat, that you should *watch* with intense concern over the welfare of your never-dying soul? That soul which must either rejoice with angels in heaven, or wail with devils in hell throughout eternity.

That soul, which like a beleaguered city is closely invested by the most subtle of all foes, who seeks to assail it at every vulnerable quarter—every salient point—ready to follow up any advantage or to execute any strategic movement in order to accomplish its ruin.

Hence the need of constant sleepless vigilance on your part.

Let not the casket which contains the priceless jewel be made the means of its ruin. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

Let the sentries be trusty and well posted by day and night, "To guard the soul against foes or wreck."

Let every faculty be on the alert. Let every member be ready for action.

Watch against every thing that is calculated to contaminate the soul through the medium of the eye.

Watch against every unholy sound that with "toad-like breath" would suggest evil through the ear.

Watch the tongue that "no currupt communication proceed out of your mouth."—Eph. iv. 29.

Watch against every inducement to the hands to grasp forbidden fruit, or the feet to tread the paths of sin.

Watch, closely watch the citadel itself, which is the heart;—yea, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."—Prov. iv. 23.

Watch thy heart—yes, "purify your hearts."—James iv. 8. Let no idol worship be set up there. Let no covetousness, nor theft, nor murder, nor adultery lurk or be harbored there. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."—Matt. v. 8.

Watch well every appetite, bringing them all under subjection, so that no avenues of ingress to the soul be left unguarded. "Put on the whole armour of God, Ephesians vi, 11, 13, wherewith you will be able to withstand all the attacks of the wicked."

My friend, should you not "Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation," especially since "your adversary, the devil, walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."—1 Peter v. 8.

Must you then of necessity be one of his victims? Must you fall a prey to his snares?

No, no! not unless you *will* it so to be.

God the Father does not desire it should be so. "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves and live ye." Ezekiel xviii. 32. Or as expressed in 2 Peter iii. 9,—"The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John iii. 16.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him; and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon."—Isaiah lv. 7.

God the Son does not desire it. Does he not say—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—Matt. xi. 28.

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—Luke xix. 10.

"Ye WILL NOT come to me, that ye might have life."—John v. 40.

"Him that cometh to me I WILL in no wise cast out."—John vi. 37.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."—Revelations iii. 20.

"Would Jesus have the sinner die!
Why hangs He then on yonder tree?
What means that strange expiring cry?
Sinner, He bled for you and me!"

Truly, "He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; * * and with his stripes we are healed."—Isaiah liii.

God the Spirit does not desire it. For is not the Holy Spirit commissioned "to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment?"—John xvi. 8.

Is not the Holy Ghost styled the Comforter, who shall teach us all things and bring all the teachings of Christ to our remembrance?—John xiv. 26. And is it not promised that He shall abide with us forever?"—John xiv. 16.

Is not the Spirit commissioned to strive with the heart of rebellious man,—Genesis vi. 3,—and are we not exhorted to beware, lest we grieve or quench that Spirit?—1 Thessalonians v. 19. Ephesians iv. 30. And will you not, O unconverted friend, listen to the beautiful and tender call of the Spirit, saying: "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever WILL, let him take the water of life freely."—Rev. xxii. 17.

Thus it is clearly proved, that if you are finally lost, it will be the result of your own free, deliberate choice.—"Thou hast destroyed thyself,"—Hosea xiii. 9,—will be burned upon your soul with letters of eternal fire.

And now, O sinner, in the name of Him who died that you might live, I beseech you, *Watch* for the time when Jesus bids you has come; "Behold, *now* is

the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation."—2 Corinthians vi. 2.

"O turn ye, O turn ye, for why will ye die,
When God in great mercy is coming so nigh?
Now Jesus invites you, the Spirit says come,
And angels are waiting to welcome you home."

Then come to Jesus, O "come, for all things are now ready."—Luke xiv. 17.

Ready the Father is to own
And welcome his returning son;
Ready the gracious Saviour stands,
And spreads for you his bleeding hands.

Ready the Spirit from above
To fill the broken heart with love,
T' apply and witness Jesus' blood,
And wash and seal you sons of God.

Ready for you the angels wait,
To triumph in your blest estate;
Tuning their harps by which to praise
The wonders of Redeeming grace.

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No. 258.

DO YOU INTEND TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

BY THE REV. S. S. POTTER.

In the still hour of midnight, when all nature seemed to repose and invite man to slumber, the writer was called up to visit a young man who had been fatally injured by the cars. He was in the bloom of youth, and an hour before buoyant and expectant—presuming on many years of life; but in an unexpected moment he was called to die. Standing by his couch he recognised me as a minister of Christ, and exclaimed, "*Oh! I did not think I should die so soon; I intended to be a Christian before I died.*" Trained as he had been amidst religious influences, he was fully sensible of the awful event of meeting death unprepared, and yet he knew that he could live but an hour or two at most. Never, no never, will the utterances of that dying youth be obliterated from my memory—his unavailing sorrow that he had not carried out his intention to be a Christian before being overtaken by death—that it was too late, too late—that he must die without the hope of heaven. His voice, faltering with these deep regrets on his lips, soon sank in silence, and his spirit passed away.

Perchance these lines may come to the notice of some youth—some gallant soldier in our armies—who *intends* to die a Christian, though conscious he is not one now. Reader, are *you such a one?* Are you waiting for a convenient season?

Think you the dying hour will be the convenient time—your body racked with pain—your mind enervated by disease? Remember, you may be called to die suddenly as others have, without even an hour's warning. There *is* danger in your case. Something has led you to neglect the needful preparation—and

how do you know but the same temptations—the same inducements—the same influences—which have succeeded so well in occasioning your delay, in the past, *may continue to operate, and even with more force* than at present, until it is too late to be saved? God says, "To-day"—your heart says, To-morrow. You hear mercy's voice to-day—it may not reach you to-morrow. You are in life to-day—you may be numbered among the dead to-morrow. Oh! it is too hazardous merely *to intend* to be a Christian. Thus it was with this young man, and so it has been with others, many others, who fell immeasurably short of heaven.

Unreconciled to God, unpardoned, how imminent your peril! If then you would avoid dying regrets, if you would escape that death that never dies, and the fruitless wailings of despair—if you would be saved and go to heaven, hasten, oh hasten *to carry out* your intention to be a Christian, "for in such an hour as you think not the Son of Man cometh." "Behold, now is the accepted time! Behold, now is the day of salvation!" It may be with you as with many others, "Now or never." Your better judgment urges you, your eternal interest presses you, to secure at once a preparation for death. God warns you in his word, and by his providences, to be ready. The Saviour entreats you with dying love, the Spirit knocks at the door of your heart for entrance. "Why will ye die?" And now, with so much light and knowledge in regard both to duty and danger, *can* you, *will* you, *dare* you, risk your eternal all on another hour's delay? "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

"Sinner, perhaps this very day,
Thy last accepted time may be;
Oh, shouldst thou grieve Him now away,
Then hope may never beam on thee."

Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

No. 259.

PLAIN SPEAKING.

In this tract, I wish to speak to you plainly about your soul.

I do not know you. But I know that millions are not in the right way as to their souls. Perhaps *you* are such a person.

The wrong way leads to everlasting misery. If you are in the wrong way, this is what you are going to. If you go on as you are, you are lost.

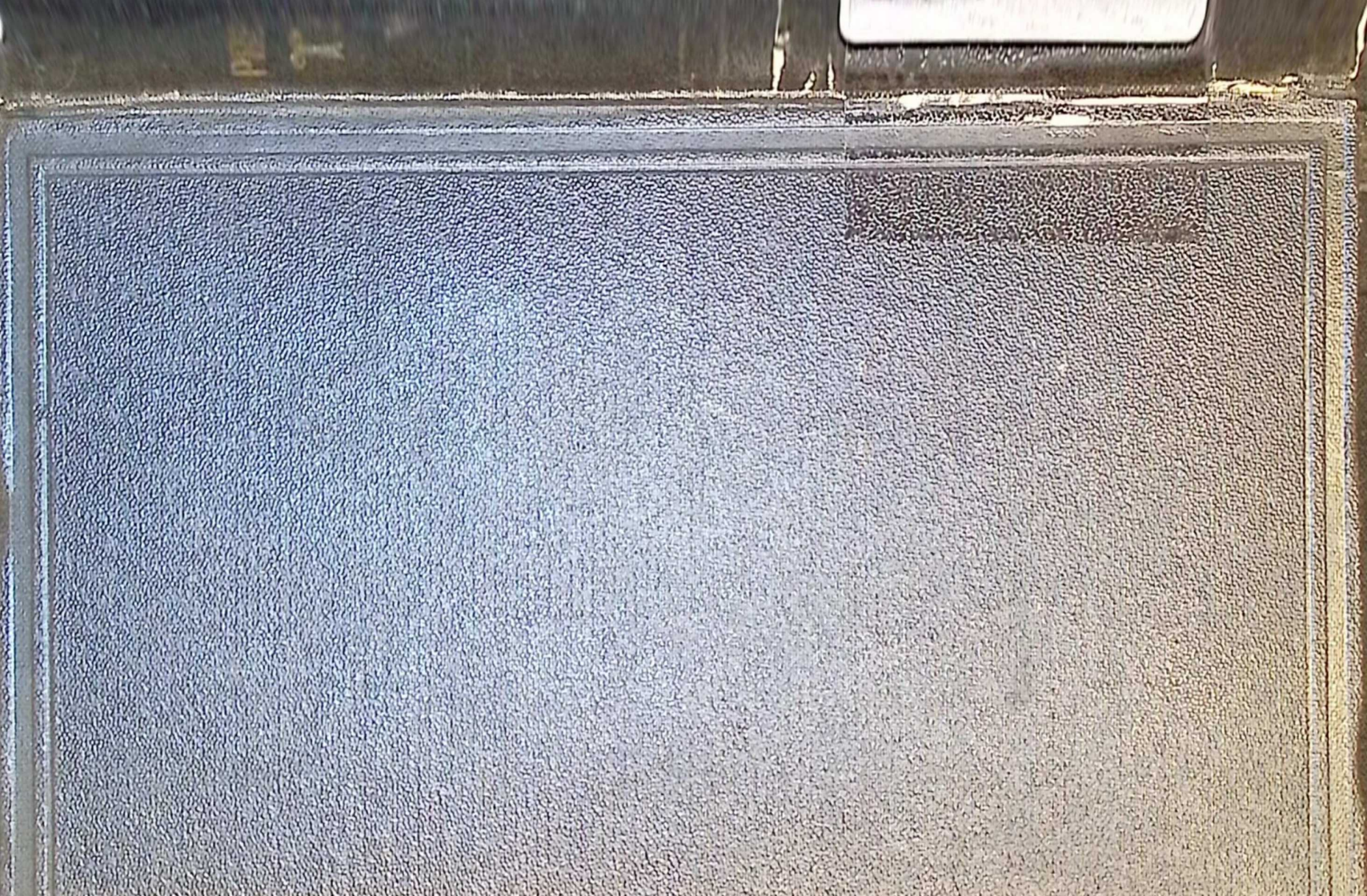
Think. Think seriously and honestly. How are you living? What are you doing? What does your way seem to you, when you look well at it? Is it the right way, or the wrong? the way of life, or the way of death? Let conscience speak.

There is One who pities all who are in the wrong way, cares for them, and calls them. He does so to *you*. At this moment he pities you. By this tract he calls you. His name is Jesus.

He died for sinners, for those who were out of the right way. Nothing but his dying for them could bring them back. He died for sinners, and he is still full of compassion and love. He knows all that you are doing, and sees how you are living; he has known it all along; yet he pities you, and is willing to save you.

He calls you to come to him. He will not turn you away because you have gone astray so long. He will receive you kindly, and forgive you, and set you in the way of life. I know not who you are; but this I say boldly, that he will be *your* Saviour, reader, if you will come to him.

Ah! come to him. Come *now*. Sin is ruinous, time is short, eternity draws on. It is a fearful thing to be in the wrong way. There is no repentance in the grave, no turning when once the end is reached. God is gracious and long-suffering, and Jesus is mighty to save. As you love your own soul, as you desire to be saved, as you would escape an end more dreadful than words can describe, come, come to Jesus! He is the only way, the only Saviour.

I pray that God may give his Holy Spirit to you who read. While you read, do you the same. Lift up your heart to God, and say, "O God, I am a sinner. Blot out all my sins in my Saviour's blood. Give me thy Holy Spirit. Make my heart new, and turn me unto thee. Forgive me, bless me, and save me, for Jesus Christ's sake!" God has *promised* to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

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